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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 11 monthly newsletter issues, in English and Spanish language versions, exploring topics related to early childhood behavior and parenting. Regularly appearing features are "Library Resources," "Preschoolers in the Kitchen," "Websites for Parents," and "The Doctor's Corner." Major topics of the newsletter issues are as follows: (1) children, software, and computers (January); (2) children and grief (February); (3) discipline (March); (4) touch (April); (5) children and math (May); (6) children and divorce (June); (7) special gifts children receive from others (July/August); (8) socially skilled children (September); (9) children and music (October); (10) inclusion (November); and (11) anger (December). (HTH)

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Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 1999.

Edited by Sandra Wolkoff and Neala S. Schwartzberg

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award

Volume 14, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* January 1999

CHILDREN, SOFTWARE, AND COMPUTERS
What Parents Need and Want to Know

There's no doubt about it – your computer can do lot more than taxes. Just pop in a CD, and your computer is magically transformed into a math tutor, a musical synthesizer, or a powerful art easel (with paint that never dries up.)

All you need to do is get a computer, get some software, and that's it. Right? Not really. Things can get a little tricky, and it's easy to waste a lot of money on failed experiments. The ingredients for success include a good computer, some great software, and strong doses of common sense.

Ages & Stages: What Children Can Do & When

Birth to 18 months

If you are buying a computer solely to entertain your baby, don't bother. To babies, this expensive machine is little more than a giant busy box. They delight in sitting on your lap. They love to look at the colors on the screen, hear the sounds from the speakers, mouth the mouse and touch the keyboard. Don't expect them to make the connection between their movements of the mouse or keyboard and events on the screen. They'll learn as much if not more from banging on pots and pans, and stacking blocks.

18 months to 2½ years

At about 18 months, children first begin noticing that they can have an effect on the objects they see on the screen. They'll need some assistance, as they don't have the necessary skills to use the mouse. We've seen some families use a touch screen with children in this age group. This lets them touch the pictures on the screen to make things happen. Touch screens aren't really necessary though, as some programs will let children press any key on the keyboard to hear a favorite song or discover pictures and animations.

2½ to 3 years

Age 2½ for many children is a real turning point when it comes to computer use. Not only can they sit for a bit longer, but they have the fine motor control to use a mouse independently. Now they can easily negotiate the activities in programs. They especially love singing along with the music, while watching events on the screen. Keep in mind that children develop their motor skills at different rates, so the keyboard or mouse may not always be easy to use. Also remember that computer use is a very social activity for young children – they will especially love sitting in your lap so that you can experience the activities together.

3 to 5 years

These are the first real years of independent computer use. Children can now use their hands to manipulate the mouse expertly (providing they've had plenty of practice), and can use a variety of programs. Kids at this age typically want to share the fun with a friend. Electronic storybooks work especially well at this stage, as do simple simulations. Preschool activity packs and creativity programs that let them print their work are also good for this age group.

5 to 7 years

Kindergartners and first graders can make choices from pull-down menus to launch programs themselves (some will even install them for you!). They can also use the computer for simulations, creativity, and even for reference. With some help, they can go on to the Internet to research a topic of interest, such as dogs, cats or that special lizard. This is a time when solid computer activities can play a valuable role in supporting and building school skills. By this age, they know where the keys are on the keyboard, and can hunt and peck their own names. But don't expect

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them to be able to type yet -- formal typing skills will come later.

✎ What Makes a Software Program Good?

Just ask a child – some software programs are always enjoyable to use while others are duds. The question we continually ask is, what is the magic that makes certain programs so much better than others? The answer lies in a mixture of common sense and basic child development knowledge.

Children Like Success

Have you ever had good intentions about completing an activity, but as soon as the activity became too difficult, you gave up? Like adults, children are motivated to participate in activities in which they feel competent. If children feel successful when playing with software they are likely to come back to the program repeatedly. Good programs offer a range of difficulty levels that automatically adjust to what the child can do - programs should be neither too easy or too hard. As little as 30 seconds on a too difficult program can turn enthusiasm into frustration. Too-easy programs are likely to be boring and will most likely be used only once or twice.

Children also like success in the operation of the program. A good design helps children easily figure out how to get in and out of the program, choose each activity, and print or save their work. If the program is designed for nonreaders, for example, the menu should consist of pictures rather than words. The best programs allow children to operate them on their own, without the assistance of an adult or older child.

Children Don't Like Feeling "Trapped"

Often called "reversibility," this concept is easily understood by the analogy of exploring an old house full of different rooms. You are unlikely to go into a new room if you think the door might lock behind you. If you are convinced that the doors won't close, the floor feels secure beneath your feet, and you feel in control, your curiosity begins to do its work – leading you further into different rooms. That's one reason why good software programs ALWAYS provided one or more ways of undoing or reversing an action, either through a back arrow, or some other easy-to-understand metaphor or icon.

Children Are Active Learners

The spirit of play is never stronger than when you are a child. That's why the best software taps a child's urge to experiment. New concepts can be tried out in a variety of ways, giving children a chance to choose activities compatible with their own interests and abilities. The best programs incorporate open-ended features giving children a chance to create their own movies, outfits, stories, artwork, or plays according to their individual choices. This is not to say that "drill & practice" or workbook style software is bad. Children enjoy and benefit greatly from this type of software when it provides several different ways to practice a concept, along with entertaining and meaningful activities, sounds and graphics.

Children Don't Read Directions

Like many adults, children hate to stop to listen to directions, and they can't stand being told to wait while a narrator tells them what to do. Instead, they plunge right in. The best software can be operated intuitively, by way of clear, uncomplicated icons. Help, if needed, is provided on the spot in the form of friendly advice, and in context of the immediate problem.

Children Respond to Immediate Gratification

The best programs do not make children wait. When they "click" on a picture or word, the related activity or routine should snap to life, without delay. Children also do not wait for credits, title screens, or mini-lectures on how to use the program These should easily be skipped with the click of the mouse. For incorrect answers, the computer's response should be immediate. Prizes, points, or other reinforcers should be given on the spot, as soon as the child is successful.

Children are Social Creatures

Just imagine how terrible it would be to hit a hole-in-one with no one around. Children naturally want to share their accomplishments – and good software does this when it lets children print out their work or a certificate, or when it keeps ongoing track of a child's activity so that others may see his or her progress. We are not suggesting that only the product or award at the end of the activity matters to children – simply that these things seem to contribute to the longevity of a program.

Children Like Novelty

"Variety is the spice of life" certainly applies to software. Math programs should randomly order problems so that the child is not bored by solving the same problems over and over again. Reading programs should provide a wide range of pictures, words and phrases to incorporate into stories. Interactive adventures should have different branches to take each time. The characters in cause-effect programs should engage in different sequences – click on the fish and it jumps, choose the fish again and it blows bubbles.

Children Like "Neat" Stuff

Children pay attention to programs that incorporate enjoyable graphics, sounds and other features. Practicing math facts to fly a space ship to the moon or to find a secret treasure in the ocean is a lot more exciting than solving problems to see a smiling face.

Children Demand Quality

Media pioneers, such as the late Walt Disney, understand that children can be the harshest critics. They respond to good music, original story lines, and quality graphics; and don't like being talked down to or underestimated.

Excerpted with permission from Young Kids and Computers: A parent's survival guide by Warren Buckleitner, Ann Orr and Ellen Wolock. Published by "Children's Software Revue" (800) 993-9499, Flemington, New Jersey.

→ Glossary of Terms

- **Boot:** To start or restart a system and program.
- **CD:** Compact disk.
- **"Click On":** Another word for "select". Used when an operator "clicks" one of the buttons on a mouse.
- **Cursor:** The pointer or arrow on the screen.
- **Graphics:** The pictures and artwork that is part of a program and appears on the screen.
- **Hardware:** The actual, physical computer and its equipment including the hard drive, monitor, keyboard, and mouse.
- **Icon:** A symbol or picture that appears on the screen representing a program function or option.
- **Mouse:** The pointer device for a computer. Moving the mouse moves a cursor on the screen. Clicking a mouse allows you to select.
- **Pull-Down Menu:** A common technique for presenting choices on the computer screen.
- **Software:** The instructions that tell the hardware what to do. These software programs may be stored on CD Roms, floppy disks, or obtained from the Internet.
- **Touch Screen:** A specially designed monitor that allows the operator to touch the pictures on the screen to make things happen.

Warren Buckleitner

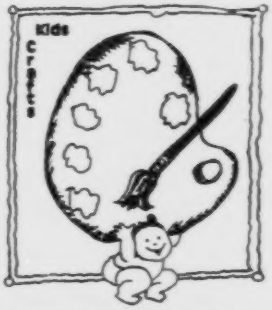
Dear Reader

No one ever had to convince me of the importance of computers. I grew up on science fiction and, like any fan, I just knew that computers were the best thing ever invented. Of course, at the time, computers were big clunky things taking up a whole room and with much less power than the slightly dated computer on which I'm writing this column. It didn't matter to me. I knew that some day computers would do all of the things I dreamed they could do. It is indeed coming true. We live in a world of computers. We use them to create art, write novels, produce book reports and homework assignments, and layout parenting newsletters.

Because computers are so important, we sometimes get carried away. We think that infants can benefit from bashing away at a keyboard, or that any software is a good piece of software. So, this month we're delighted to feature an article on computers - how children relate to computers at different ages, what to look for when purchasing software, a glossary of terms, and more.

Of course, kids need time away from computers - time to work with their hands experiencing the joy of crafts. Once again, Dawn Marie Barhyte provides more fun activities.

From all of us here at *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*, Happy New Year! May it be a year filled with good health and happiness.



KIDS CRAFTS

Winter is a great time for crafts. Most kids love making things and crafts are a terrific pastime that will give your child pride as they complete projects. Working with craft materials also encourages kids to be creative and spontaneous in their experiments.

Offer your child the materials and demonstrate how to use them correctly, then let them enjoy the activity without having to conform to expectations. Don't try to fix it if it's unrecognizable. There is no better way to spend quality time with your children than making things. So roll up your sleeves and enjoy.

☛ **Valentine Sponge Prints** You will need: Sponges, scissors, tempera-paint, white paper. *Cut heart shapes out of the sponges. Dab sponge in tempera paints using the sponge as a printer. Have your child create a valentine mural or homemade wrapping paper. Variation: Have your child cut whimsical shapes out of the sponges and, using his choice of colors, make his very own wall mural for his room.*

☛ **Hide and Seek Color Etchings** - You will need: Nail or toothpick, crayons, white oak tag. *Using all of the crayons except the black one, have your child make a heavy, bright coat of crayon, covering the oak tag with lots of vivid color. While coloring, have your child press down hard. When the page is covered, have your child take the black crayon and color over the entire sheet of oak tag. Now have your child carefully use the nail or toothpick to make a design, exposing the bright colors underneath the black. Vary the thickness of the nail or toothpick marks to vary the thickness of the color which is exposed underneath.*

☛ **Silly Sock Puppets** - You will need: Socks, scissors, fabric glue, felt, buttons, yarn, ribbon, and cotton balls, shredded newspaper, or other materials to stuff the sock. *Have your child decorate the stuffed sock with the materials to invent their own special character. Invite your child to tell you all about their creation. Watch the puppets open a world of pretend. Have an impromptu puppet show featuring the kids' creations. Encourage dialogue by asking questions and see your child's self-expression blossom.*

☛ **Everything Collage** - You will need: Oak tag or cardboard, tissue paper, non-toxic glue or rubber cement, scissors, odd scraps such as string, yarn, fabric, ribbon, magazine pictures, photos, stamps, feathers, seeds, macaroni, beans, leaves, sticks. *First go on a treasure hunt to collect materials. Then have your child assemble the materials in any pattern she chooses, gluing the materials securely to the oak tag or cardboard. Once complete, see if your child can name other objects with the same textures. You can cover the collage with plastic wrap to preserve it or leave it as it is so your child can explore it and feel the materials later on. Display the collage by hanging it at your child's eye level.*

NOTE: Remember, use of materials such as buttons, scissors, sticks, beans, seeds, etc. must be closely supervised.

Dawn Marie Barhyte

Library Resources

A Taste of History

🕮 ***Baby in a Basket*** by Gloria Rand; illustrated by Ted Rand; Cobblehill Books/Dutton; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $14.99. Travel in the early years of the 1900s was still risky, especially midwinter travel from Alaska to Seattle, Washington. A sleigh overturns in a blizzard and the baby can't be found. But as everyone is about to give up hope, trappers spot a basket sailing on a chunk of ice along the half frozen river.

🕮 ***The Bear That Heard Crying*** by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock and Helen Kinsey; illustrated by Ted Rand; Puffin; New York, 1997; Softcover, $5.99. The true story of a little girl who, in 1783, became lost in the forest. Found safe after three days she told her family about the "big black dog" who kept her warm every night. Searchers found bear tracks all around the spot where she was found.

🕮 ***Boss of the Plains: The hat that won the west*** by Laurie Carlson; pictures by Holly Meade; DK Publishing; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.95. We all know the famous Stetson hat. This is the story of its creation by John Batterson Stetson. A fascinating glimpse of life in the early American west combined with the story of Stetson's determination.

🕮 ***Johnny Appleseed*** by Steven Kellogg; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. The story of John Chapman who became known as Johnny Appleseed, and his journey through the early United States, clearing land and planting apple trees. Contains both the recorded events and the legends.

🕮 ***Mailing May*** by Michael O. Tunnell; illustrated by Ted Rand; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1997. It's the early 1900s and a little girl wants to visit her grandmother 75 miles away. Her family can't afford the train fare so her father buys the postage, "stamps" her and US mail delivers her to grandma.

🕮 ***My First Little House Books - A Little Prairie House*** by Renee Graef; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover $12.95. and ***Prairie Day*** by Renee Graef Harper Trophy; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.95. Based on *The Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, these tell the story of the Ingalls family and their experiences traveling by covered wagon and their life on the prairie.

🕮 ***New Hope*** by Henri Sorensen; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Paperback, $5.99. How does a town begin? A young boy listens to the story of his great-great-grandfather's landing in America in 1885 and how he founded the town of New Hope.

🕮 ***Seven Brave Women*** by Betsy Hearne; illustrated by Bethanne Anderson; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1997. The warm and inspiring story of seven generations of gallant women.

🕮 ***Snowflake Bentley*** by Jacqueline Briggs Martin; illustrated by Mary Azarian; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, MA., 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. A fascinating look at the man who discovered that no two snowflakes are exactly alike. Nicely combines the story of his life with the facts of his work.

🕮 ***The 18 Penny Goose*** by Sally M. Walker; pictures by Ellen Beier; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. One of their *I Can Read Books* it makes a nice story for younger children, although with less emphasis on pictures. It is the Revolutionary War and the Wright family must flee, leaving behind the daughter's geese include her special gander Solomon. Will Solomon be spared or will he be dinner?

🕮 ***Turn of the Century*** by Ellen Jackson; illustrated by Jan Davey Ellis; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1998; Hardcover, $17.95. Although this book is a bit old for preschoolers, it presents a fascinating look at history beginning in the year 1000, told through the lives of children. Begins with a 10-year-old peasant boy in the year 1000 and continues each 100 years with the life of another young child.

🕮 ***Waterman's Child*** by Barbara Mitchell; illustrated by Daniel San Souci; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1997. Told through the eye of a third-generation "waterman's child," it is about a family who never abandoned life on the water, no matter the hard ship, and also never lost sight of the most important thing in life – each other.

🕮 ***Sun Song*** by Jean Marzollo; illustrated by Laura Regan; HarperCollins Publishers; New York; 1997; Hardcover. Through rich verse and marvelous illustrations, "Sun Song" is a story of the sun's passage through an entire day from dawn to dusk. The book is a jewel. It can be used by parents to spark discussions on time and history.

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NIÑOS, PROGRAMAS Y COMPUTADORAS

Lo Que Los Padres Quieren y Necesitan Saber

No hay duda al respecto – su computadora puede hacer mucho más que su declaración de impuestos. Simplemente ponga un CD y su computadora se transforma mágicamente en un tutor de matemáticas, un sintetizador musical o un poderoso atril para arte (en el que la pintura jamás se seca).

Todo lo que necesita hacer es obtener una computadora, algunos programas y listo, ¿verdad? La verdad es que no. Las cosas se pueden complicar, y es fácil malgastar cantidades de dinero en experimentos que fracasarán. Los ingredientes para el éxito incluyen una buena computadora, algunos programas de primera calidad y fuertes dosis de sentido común,

Edades y Etapas: lo que los niños pueden hacer y cuando

Desde el nacimiento a los 18 meses
Si piensa comprar una computadora solo para entretener a su bebé, no se moleste. Para los bebés, esta costosa máquina es poco más que una gigantesca caja de trastos. A los bebés les encanta sentarse en su falda. Les encanta mirar los colores de la pantalla, escuchar el sonido de los parlantes, echarse el "ratoncito" a la boca y tocar el teclado. No espere que hagan la conexión entre sus movidas del ratoncito o los manotazos al teclado y lo que sucede en la pantalla. Aprenderán eso, y más, golpeando ollas y sartenes y amontonando bloques.

De 18 meses a 2 años y medio
Alrededor de los 18 meses, los niños comienzan a notar que ellos pueden tener un efecto sobre los objetos que ven en la pantalla. Van a necesitar algo de ayuda eso si, pues aun no tienen la habilidad necesaria para usar el ratoncito. Hemos visto algunas familias que usan una pantalla de contacto con niños de esta edad. Esto les permite tocar las imágenes en la pantalla y hacer que sucedan cosas. Las pantallas de contacto no son realmente necesarias, pues hay programas que le permiten tocar cualquier tecla y escuchar su canción favorita o descubrir imágenes o animaciones.

De 2 años y medio a 3 años
Cuando se trata de computadoras, para muchos niños los dos años son un verdadero hito. No solo se pueden sentar ante la computadora por más tiempo, sino que tienen el control motor como para usar el ratoncito por si solos. Ahora pueden llevar a cabo fácilmente las actividades de los programas. Les encanta especialmente cantar junto con la música mientras miran lo que sucede en la pantalla. No se olvide que los niños desarrollan sus capacidades motoras a diferente ritmo, por lo que el uso del teclado o del ratoncito puede no ser fácil todo el tiempo. Recuerde también que el uso de la computadora es una actividad muy social para los niños pequeños - les gusta especialmente sentarse en su falda para que ambos puedan experimentar juntos las actividades.

De 3 a 5 años
Estos son los primeros años de verdadera independencia en cuanto al uso de la computadora. A esta edad, los niños pueden usar sus manos para manipular el ratoncito con destreza (siempre que hayan tenido suficiente práctica), y pueden usar una variedad de programas. Típicamente, los niños a esta edad quieren compartir la diversión con un amigo o una amiga. Los libros de cuentos electrónicos funcionan especialmente bien en esta etapa, como también las simulaciones simples. También son buenos para esta edad los programas creativos y conjuntos de actividades para pre-escolares que les permiten imprimir su trabajo.

De 5 a 7 años
Los niños de kindergarten y de primer grado pueden hacer selecciones de menús descolgantes para lanzar -hacer partir- programas (¡algunos de ellos incluso los pueden instalar para usted!) También pueden usar la computadora para hacer simulaciones, actividades creativas, y hasta para buscar referencias. Con algo de ayuda, pueden conectarse a la Internet para investigar un tema de interés, como perros, gatos o esa lagartija especial. Esta es una edad en la que las actividades computacionales sólidas juegan un valioso papel en la construcción y apoyo de la capacitación estudiantil. A esta edad saben donde están las teclas en el teclado, y pueden escribir sus propios nombres de a una letra a la vez. Pero no espere que puedan escribir todavía - la capacidad formal de escribir viene más adelante.

¿Qué Hace Que Un Programa Sea Bueno?

No tiene más que preguntarle a cualquier niño - algunos programas para computadoras son siempre un placer mientras que otros son un bodrio. La pregunta que nos hacemos constantemente es, ¿cual es la magia que hace que ciertos programas sean tanto mejores que otros? La respuesta yace en una mezcla de sentido común y un conocimiento básico del desarrollo de los niños.

A Los Niños Les Gusta El Éxito
¿Alguna vez usted tuvo toda la intención de terminar una actividad, pero apenas esa actividad se puso demasiado difícil, se dio por vencido? Al igual que los adultos, los niños se sienten motivados a participar en actividades en las cuales se sienten competentes. Si los niños se sienten exitosos mientras juegan con un programa, lo más probable es que vuelvan a usarlo repetidamente. Los buenos programas ofrecen una gama de niveles de dificultad que se ajusta automáticamente a lo que el niño puede hacer - los programas no debieran ser ni demasiado difíciles ni demasiado fáciles. Bastan solo unos

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30 segundos con un programa demasiado difícil para transformar el entusiasmo en frustración. Y los programas demasiado fáciles pueden ser aburridos y probablemente no serán usados más de una o dos veces.

A los niños también les gusta el éxito en la operación del programa. Un buen diseño ayuda a los niños a deducir como empezar y terminar el programa, escoger cada actividad e imprimir y guardar su trabajo. Si el programa está diseñado para niños que no saben leer, por ejemplo, el menú consiste de ilustraciones en vez de palabras. Los mejores programas permiten a los niños operar por si solos, sin ayuda de un adulto o de un niño mayor.

A Los Niños No Les Gusta Sentirse "Atrapados"

Este concepto, muchas veces conocido como "reversión", es fácilmente entendido si se usa la analogía de una vieja casa llena de piezas. Es poco probable que usted vaya a entrar a una nueva pieza si cree que la puerta puede cerrarse detrás suyo y dejarlo "atrapado". Si está convencido que las puertas no se van a cerrar, que los pisos se sienten firmes bajo sus pies y se siente que está en control, la curiosidad empezará a funcionar y lo llevará a diferentes piezas. Esta es una razón por la que los buenos programas SIEMPRE proveen de una o más maneras de revertir una acción. ya sea a través de una flecha u otra metáfora o ícono fácil de entender.

Los Niños Son Estudiantes Activos

El espíritu de jugar nunca es más fuerte que cuando se es un niño. Por eso es que los mejores programas explotan la necesidad del niño de experimentar. Nuevos conceptos pueden ser probados de diversas maneras, dándole a los niños la oportunidad de escoger actividades compatibles con sus propios intereses y habilidades. Los mejores programas incorporan aspectos que le dan a los niños la oportunidad de crear sus propios filmes, vestimentas, historias, arte, o dramas de acuerdo a sus decisiones personales. Esto no significa que los programas que son del estilo de "repetir y practicar" o como libros de estudio sean malos. Los niños gozan y se benefician mucho de este tipo de programas cuando estos proveen diferentes maneras de practicar un concepto, junto con actividades, sonidos y gráficos.

Los Niños No Leen Instrucciones

l igual que muchos adultos, los niños detestan tener que detenerse a escuchar instrucciones, y no toleran tener que esperar mientras un narrador les dice lo que tienen que hacer. En vez, ellos simplemente se zambullen en el programa. Los mejores programas pueden ser operados intuitivamente a través de íconos claros y carentes de complicaciones. Si es necesario recibir ayuda, esta debe ser proveída en el mismo instante en forma de consejos amistosos y dentro del contexto del problema inmediato.

Los Niños Reaccionan Positivamente A La Satisfacción Inmediata

Los mejores programas no hacen esperar a los niños. Cuando seleccionan una imagen o una palabra, la actividad relacionada debiera aparecer sin demora. Los niños tampoco esperan para ver los créditos, las pantallas con títulos, o las mini-charlas sobre como usar el programa. Estas debieran poder omitirse fácilmente con el ratoncito. Cuando hay respuestas equivocadas, la reacción de la computadora debiera ser inmediata. Los premios, puntos u otros refuerzos debieran ser dados en el momento mismo, tan pronto como el niño ha tenido éxito.

Los Niños Son Criaturas Sociales

Imagínese lo terrible que sería meter una pelota de golf en el hoyo de un solo golpe y que no haya nadie alrededor para apreciarlo. Es la naturaleza de los niños compartir sus triunfos - y un buen programa computacional hace esto cuando le permite a los niños imprimir su trabajo o un certificado, o cuando mantiene un récord de la actividad del niño de manera que otros puedan ver su progreso. No estamos sugiriendo que al niño solo le importa el producto o premio al final de la actividad - sino más bien que estas cosas aparentemente contribuyen a la longevidad de un programa.

A Los Niños Les Gusta Lo Novedoso

Ciertamente que el dicho, "la variedad es la sazón de la vida", se aplica a los programas de computadoras. Los programas de matemáticas debieran ordenar al azar los problemas de manera que el niño no se aburra resolviendo los mismos problemas una y otra vez. Los programas de lectura debieran proveer de una amplia gama de imágenes, palabras y frases para ser incorporadas en las historias. Las aventuras interactivas debieran ofrecer diferentes ramas por donde irse cada vez. Los personajes de programas de causa y efecto debieran tener secuencias diferentes cada vez - seleccione el pez y este salta, selecciónelo de nuevo y hace burbujas.

A Los Ninos Les Gustan Las Cosas "Estupendas"

Los niños prestan atención a los programas que incorporan gráficos, sonidos y otros aspectos placenteros. Practicar matemáticas para poder navegar un cohete espacial a la luna o encontrar un tesoro secreto en el océano, es mucho más excitante que resolver problemas para ver una cara sonriente.

Los Niños Exigen Calidad

Los pioneros de lo medios de comunicación masiva, como el finado Walt Disney, han entendido que los niños pueden ser los más duros críticos. Reaccionan positivamente ante la buena música, las historias originales y los gráficos de calidad, y no les gusta ser tratados como niños pequeños o ser subestimados.

Condensado con permiso de "Young Kids and Computers: A parent's survival guide", por Warren Buckleitner, Ann Orr y Ellen Wolock. Publicado por "Children's Software Revue" (800) 993-9499, Flemington, NJ.

Glosario de Términos

Iniciar: empezar o re-empezar un sistema y un programa.

"Hacer clic": otra palabra para "seleccionar". Se usa cuando un usuario aprieta uno de los botones del ratoncito.

Cursor: la flecha o icono que indica la posición del ratoncito en la pantalla.

Gráficos: las imágenes e ilustraciones que son parte del programa y que aparecen en la pantalla.

Equipo ("Hardware"): la computadora propiamente tal y el instrumental incluido o que puede ser agregado; disco duro, teclado, monitor, impresora y ratón.

Icono. un símbolo o diseño que aparece en la pantalla y que representa una función u opción del programa

Ratón, ratoncito (mouse): el dispositivo de una computadora que sirve como indicador. Moviendo el ratón mueve un cursor (generalmente una flecha) en la pantalla. Presionar con el botón del ratón permite llevar a cabo una acción o seleccionar algo.

Menú descolgante: técnica común para presentar posibilidades en la pantalla de la computadora.

Programas ("software"): las instrucciones que le dicen a la computadora y al equipo lo que tienen que hacer. Estos programas pueden ser guardados en discos compactos (CD), discos magnéticos o "bajados" (obtenidos) de la Internet.

Pantalla de contacto: un monitor especialmente diseñado que permite al operador tocar las imágenes en la pantalla para hacer que suceda algo.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award

Volume 14, Number 2 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — February 1999

CHILDREN AND GRIEF

How Parents Can Help In Times of Loss

Parents often ask me how they can protect their young children from the pain associated with the loss of a loved one. Unfortunately, you can't. Death, divorce or other loss is a reality of life for children and adults. Attempts to protect them from this pain often seem to children as a denial of their own experiences. But when we talk with children about their experiences and help them to develop effective coping skills we empower them to build strengths they can draw on throughout their lives. Informed, supportive adults can help children to accomplish the crucial bereavement tasks of: understanding, grieving, commemorating, and going on.

- ***Understanding:*** Children as young as infancy respond to loss, and to the changes raised by adults trying to cope with that loss. The child's developmental stage is a key factor.

Preschool children respond to loss as they might to a fairy tale or story. They perceive a villain and a victim, and wish that the hero could be strong enough and powerful enough to overcome the adversity so everyone can live happily ever after.

Unable to comprehend that death is permanent, universal and inevitable, the young child may believe that death can be avoided, outsmarted, or even reversed. One youngster I know talked about wishing he had done something to bring his father back to life. When I asked what he might have done, his sad demeanor faded, and a broad grin lit up his entire little face: "Well I do know karate!" he said, and showed me the forceful, dramatic techniques he wished he had used to chase death from his father's bed. When children perceive death as a monster to escape, they may feel inadequate about themselves and the adults who have not escaped.

We need to help young children understand that death eventually comes to all living things, and that when death occurs, they cannot change it. This is often the first time they are unable to reverse something unwanted. Children are used to second chances. They get second lives in video games, and often manage to get their own way in myriad circumstances. But with death, that can't happen. When a loved one dies, or a significant loss occurs, they need to understand what happened, why, and what the event means to them.

What to Do: Tell them what happened with as much information as appropriate for their age and circumstances. Don't assume that they are not responding to, or thinking about, the tragedy simply because they are not discussing it. Often they recognize the powerful effect of the loss on the loved ones around them, and they choose not to ask questions which they think might be upsetting to the adults. Rather than forgetting, they usually fill in the blanks with their own impression of what might have happened.

What to Say: Explain to children that when someone dies, the body stops working, and the person no longer breathes, eats, moves or does anything that we typically think of as sustaining life.

Don't describe death as similar to sleep. That can lead children to be fearful of sleeping.

Avoid saying that the person died because "she was sick", or even "because he was very old." Being sick and old are within what the child considers to be the range of her own experience and those of older siblings and parents. Instead a phrase such as "Usually the doctors can cure the illness, but sadly this illness could not be fixed, and the body just stopped being able to work." If the person was elderly you can remind them that though death comes to everyone it is usually expected with elderly persons who have lived long, full lives.

Remember that young children think in very concrete terms. They can be frightened by phrases such as "We lost him..." Instead, say "He died." Avoid "God took him" which can lead children to feel as though

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God kidnaps, or as one five-year-old told me "I think God is keeping my dad as a hostage."

• *Grieving:* Once children understand what happened, it is normal for them to experience some form of grief. Don't try to suppress or stop a child's pain by offering a treat ("Have a lollypop."), bargaining ("If you just stop crying I'll get you that new game."), or chastising ("Big boys/girls don't cry."). It is healthy for children to express their sadness.

The appearance of children's grief is often different from that of adults. It may be episodic, and seem to disappear at times, but it will always be in the background. The expression of feelings may include sorrow, confusion, worry, apathy, or rage. Putting those feelings into words, and telling the story of what happened helps heal the pain of loss for both children and adults.

What to Do: Talking about pictures our children have drawn or play acting what has happened can show us the child's true understanding. One bright young girl kept having her stuffed animals and puppets murder each other. I was puzzled, as her father died in a hospital of a cardiac condition. When I inquired, she informed me that her father had died because of a heart attack, which she understood to mean that someone had *attacked* her father's heart. Though she had been given adequate information about her father's condition and death, her own understanding of what that meant led to some confusion, worry, and dismay. Explaining the reality by using play helps young children to understand what happened and to feel more comfortable with the information.

What to Say: Grief is a universal human experience; it is a response to losing a loved one. Since everyone loves, everyone at sometime grieves.

• *Commemorating:* Commemorating a loved one's death means acknowledging the value of their life. We do this in many ways, and children can come up with creative, meaningful ways to commemorate their loved one's life.

Adults wonder about including young children in traditional funerals and other mourning rituals. Many assume that attending such an event will automatically be too upsetting or frightening. Such activities can be important for children as well as adults as they heal from the loss.

What to Do: Children should be asked if they would like to attend, and should never be forced either to attend or to participate in any way. If they do attend a wake or funeral, careful and thorough age-appropriate explanations should be given as to exactly what to expect. For example, they should be prepared for what the ritual involves, as well as what the room, cemetery, etc. will look like. They should be told the purpose of the ritual and how it is expected to help in the grieving or healing process. The consistent, underlying message should be to enhance a sense of mastery and connection.

What to Say: We might tell a youngster that the funeral gives us an opportunity to come together with everyone who loved the deceased to remember how much they are loved, and how much they will be missed. It reminds us how grateful we can be that we had a chance to love and know this special person. Most people will be sad because they will miss the person. Many might cry, just as people do when they're sad. This is unusual because children don't often see adults cry, but it is understandable. Children can be told that sometimes life is sad and hurts, but that the hurt will feel better in time. The support people give each other is powerful enough to help heal the pain and help us move on.

What Children Can Do: Sometimes children will honor and remember the one they loved with pictures, drawings, planting trees or activities which are familiar and comforting. Adults can help children create their own book about the person who has died, or make a "memory box" by decorating a small container to hold pictures, mementos, and tangible reminders. Whatever the activity it is important that children commemorate in a way that is meaningful and comforting to them. Making all of the decisions can deprive your children of accomplishing this task.

• *Going On:* This is an important part of grieving: to acknowledge the loss, experience the feelings and continue to move forward.

What to Do: Children often need to be told that it is okay to laugh, play, and have fun. A major task of grieving is not so much to relegate the deceased to the past, but to find a way to incorporate that memory and good feeling into the present and future. This involves talking about the deceased (or even *to* them), and continuing to feel a relationship with the loved one who died.

What to Say: We need to speak of the deceased rather than avoid mentioning their name. Talk about them in a typical conversation, or even set aside time to think of or talk about the deceased. We need to tell children that though the sadness might be very deep it is important to keep growing. By living each day as fully as possible we honor those who are no longer alive.

Children understand tragedies in the context of their own life experiences. They worry as to how this happened, will it happen again, and will they be safe and cared for. They need reassuring, thoughtful statements to respond to their real concerns.

It is also helpful to maintain as much consistency and predictability as possible through and after the loss. Children do respond with dismay to being sent to well meaning neighbors and relatives without adequately understanding the nature, reasons, and expectations regarding all these changes.

Children (and adults) need to be reminded that loss can be survived. Resilience, even the ability to grow and thrive in the face of adversity, comes only from exposure to adversity, not its absence. As children observe the sense of caring and community that often results from the death of a loved one, they learn valuable lessons not often encountered in their daily activities. They learn that life is precious and valuable, that human caring can help soothe, that adults can be counted on to understand and support children as they grieve, and finally that we can emerge from sadness to grow, be happy, and appreciate joy and life itself.

Holly Shaw, RN, PhD, is a nationally-known specialist on bereavement, trauma, and loss. She has been a consultant for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), is a free lance writer, and is currently working with North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center's Family Bereavement Program.

DEAR READER

Adults like to think of childhood as a carefree, even an ideal time, filled with friends, family, school. Certainly we don't like to think that it is a time in which children could experience a significant loss. But, for many that loss will occur. The question becomes: "What can the concerned people in those children's lives do?" This month Holly Shaw, a bereavement specialist, has written a guide to help adults help children cope.

You may have noticed an addition to the front page of Parent & preschooler Newsletter. We are pleased to announce that we have been given a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award. All of us at P&p feel like proud parents.

There is also one other change. Amy Houts, who has been writing *Preschooler in the Kitchen*, has decided it is time to pursue other endeavors. We will greatly miss Amy, and her contributions, and wish her much success. However, I'm delighted to be able to introduce Sandra Allen who will be contributing her stories and recipes. Sandy is a member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals - USA and a cooking educator in Connecticut. She brings her own different but special "flavor."

February 14th is Valentine's Day. Don't forget to tell the important people in your life that they are very special. And from all of us here to our very special readers...Happy Valentine's Day!

Neala Schwartzberg

Preschooler

in the Kitchen

Winter Squash

"Papa, what are we cooking tonight?" I asked this question almost everyday when I was young. I was born in a little village in Brazil. My father worked on a small farm so we planted vegetables, raised poultry for eggs, and once in a while we had a roaster. My father also raised pigs, sheep and cattle, and we had an abundance of milk, butter, cheese and yogurt.

My father patiently taught me the techniques of cooking. He showed me how to pick and rinse vegetables, fruits, and grains; how to prepare a marinade for the meat and poultry; and how to work on the stove, which was made of a tall vegetable oil can. It had openings on the top and on its side to burn the wood or charcoal. I remember I had to climb on a wooden box to reach the top of the burner to stir the food in the clay pot. But oh, how delicious the food!

The next step was how to make breads. My father taught me how to measure the flour, and all the other ingredients. We had an outside brick domed-shape oven, where we did our bread, and the neighbors would also bring their breads to be baked. These were special times for me.

"Dona Nhanha, may I help you. Would you teach me how to make that stuffed little squash? I want to make it for my papa." This was the manner I greeted Dona Nhanha almost everyday. She was one of our neighbors in the village and would take care of me while my father worked. She was small in size, but a giant in her kindness and love. Dona Nhanha was an ex-slave and her body bent with age. I didn't speak her language, and she did not speak any Portuguese but we understood each other very well. She taught me many of her African dishes and helped me to see and appreciate the beauty of each ingredient used to prepare the dishes. I have a small room in my heart filled with love for my beloved Nhanha.

I am giving you the recipe for the stuffed little squashes that I adapted from Dona Nhanha. I always think of it as a present from my father and Dona Nhanha from Brazil.

Little Squash Treasures Of Cinderella

8 Servings

I find that every child enjoys helping to prepare this dish. They love eating it, too. I think it's because of its name. In Brazil I prepared this dish with young squashes, but fortunately now we have an abundance of the Jack-Be-Little squashes (they look like little pumpkins) which are much sweeter and have an earthier taste. If these squashes are not available you can buy regular winter squash. remove the skin, cut into a round shape.

8 Jack-Be-Little squashes
8 tablespoons dark brown sugar (you can use unsweetened fruit juice instead)
8 ripe bananas
Fresh grated peel of 1 lemon
Juice of 1 lemon
2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves
1 cup unsweetened grated coconut
1 cup hot water to bake the squashes

1. Child: Using a vegetable brush or a fresh, clean sponge scrub and rinse the squashes with cold water. Pat them dry with paper towels. Measure the cinnamon, soy sauce, and coconut.

2. Adult: Set the oven on to 350 F. Cut off about 1 inch of squashes' stem part, setting them aside for later. They will be the lids for the dish. Grate the lemon peel, chop the mint leaves. Set aside.

3. Child: Scoop out and discard the seeds and membranes from the inside of the squashes. Rinse the insides and pat dry with paper towels.

4. Child. Rub 1 tablespoon of sugar inside each squash, and set them aside.

5. Child: Peel and remove the white membranes from the bananas. Place 1 banana in the plate and mash with a fork. Put mashed banana in a medium size bowl. Mash remaining bananas in the same manner.

6. Child: Add the lemon peel to the bananas. Squeeze the juice from the lemon and add to the bananas. Add the cinnamon, soy sauce, mint leaves, and the coconut. Mix everything well.

7. Adult and Child: Fill the cavities of the squashes with the banana mixture. Arrange them in the baking pan and cover with their tops.

8. Adult: Place the baking pan in the oven. Pour the cup of hot water in the baking pan. Bake squashes for about 50 to 60 minutes, or until they are tender -- when a fork is inserted and comes out without any resistance. Remove from the oven and place in individual serving plate.

Enjoy the fruits of your labor!

Sandra N. Allen

Books and Videos on Grief and Loss?

Compassion Books specializes in resources on grief and loss culled from a variety of publishers. Their 44 page catalogue isn't free, but the $2 charge is reimbursable when you order. Compassion Books; 477 Hannah Branch Road; Burnsville, NC 28714; (828) 675-5909. email: heal2grow@aol.com. They also have a website which should allow you to download their catalogue: http://www.compassionbooks.com

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Celebrating Our Multi-Cultural World

Feliciana Meets d'Loup Garou: A cajun tall tale by Tynia Thomassie; illustrated by Cat Bowman Smith; Little Brown & Company; New York, 1998. Feliciana's brothers are teasing her mercilessly about the dreaded werewolf, d'Loup Garou. Not only that, her nasty mood and impromptu hair cut has made her family so angry that she isn't allowed to go to d'fais do-do. But when Feliciana meets d'Loup Garou, they discover neither one of them is really so bad.

Fernando's Gift by Douglas Keister; Sierra Club Books for Children; San Francisco; 1998; Softcover, $6.95. Fernando lives in the rain forest of Costa Rica. When he and his friend Carmina discover that her favorite tree has been cut down, Fernando vows to replace it with a new tree – the same way his father is planting trees to replenish the rain forest. Written in Spanish and English.

The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story retold by Joseph Bruchac; pictures by Anna Vojtech; Puffin; New York; 1993; Softcover, $5.99. Long ago, when the earth was new, there was a man and a woman who lived together very happily, until one day they had a fight, and the woman left. How were they reunited? Through the sweetness of strawberries. This is a retelling of an Indian story of friendship and respect.

The Fortune-Tellers by Lloyd Alexander; illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman; Puffin; New York, 1997; Softcover, $5.99. An African setting for a lushly illustrated tale of irony and humor. A young carpenter goes to a fortune-teller to learn of his future and ends up becoming a fortune-teller himself.

The Forest Has Eyes by Elise Maclay; paintings by Bev Doolittle; The Greenwich Workshop Press; Shelton, CT, 1998; Hardcover, $16.95. Another stunningly beautiful and lyrical book from Greenwich Workshop Press. This one features watercolors of Native Americans and the Western wilderness, accompanied by text which invites the reader to look within the paintings and see the hidden images.

For My Family, Love, Allie by Ellen B. Senisi; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, Illinois, 1998; Hardcover. This is the story of the real-life celebration of Allie and her racially mixed family. Everyone brings something delicious to eat and Allie wants to contribute also. The recipe for her Peanut Butter Treats is included.

Little Oh by Laura Krauss Melmed; illustrated by Jim LaMarche; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. A lovely warm fairy tale about a woman who makes an origami doll and finds love, happiness and a real family.

Mama & Papa Have a Store by Amelia Lau Carling; Dial Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. Based, in part, on her memories of growing up with her Chinese family in Guatamala, the author describes her day and the life of the village.

Marianthe's Story by Aliki; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. Painted Words and Spoken Memories are two stories in one book. They tell of the experiences of Marianthe who started school unable to speak English but learned to express herself in pictures, and then in words.

Shabbat by Miriam Nerlove; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1998; Hardcover. A warm introduction to the celebration of the Jewish Shabbat through the eyes of a young girl.

The Storytellers by Ted Lewin; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. Walk through Fez, Morocco, and streets filled with tanners, craftsmen, and sellers of spices. When Abdul and his grandfather, the storyteller, reach the ancient gates, they spread their carpet on the ground, and grandfather begins to tell his stories. A sweet, small taste of a different life.

It's a Multi-Cultural World Through Art

Art Around the World: Loo-Loo, Boo, and more art you can do by Denis Roche; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. An 11-stop art adventure. The projects include shadow puppets (Bali), weaving (Mexico), and rain sticks (Togo).

Global Art: Activities, projects, and inventions from around the world by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter; Gryphon House, Inc. Beltsville, MD, 1998; Softcover, $14.95. Almost 200 pages of projects categorized by country, difficulty, art technique (e.g. drawing, collage, etc.) and the amount of planning and preparation. Definitely something for everyone!

* * *

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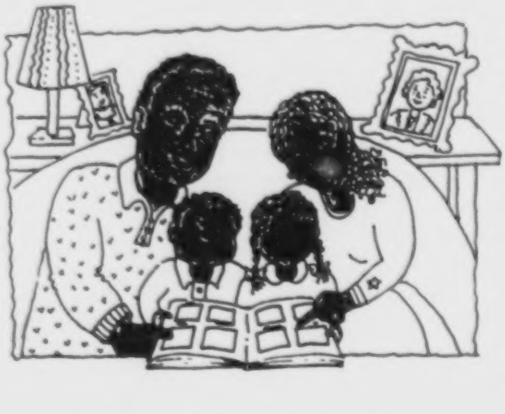
LOS NIÑOS Y EL DUELO

Como Pueden Ayudar los Padres en Momentos de Perdida



Los padres frecuentemente me preguntan como pueden proteger a sus niños pequeños del dolor relacionado con la perdida de un ser querido. Desafortunadamente no se puede. La muerte, divorcio u otra perdida es una realidad en la vida de los niños y de los adultos. Intentar protegerlos de este dolor le parecen frecuentemente a los niños como una negación de sus propias experiencias. Pero cuando hablamos con los niños sobre sus experiencias, y les ayudamos a desarrollar aptitudes para sobreponerse, les damos la posibilidad de desarrollar fuerzas que pueden usar toda su vida. Los adultos bien informados que presten apoyo, pueden ayudar a los niños a lograr las tareas cruciales del duelo: comprensión, lamento, conmemoración, y seguir adelante.

V Comprensión: Niños tan jóvenes como los bebés responden a las perdidas y a los cambios planteados por los adultos cuando tratan de superar esa perdida. La etapa del desarrollo del niño es un factor clave.

Los niños preescolares responden a una perdida de la misma manera que a un cuento de hadas o una fábula. Perciben un villano y una víctima, y desean que el héroe pudiese ser suficientemente fuerte y poderoso para superar la adversidad, para que todo el mundo pudiese vivir feliz para siempre. Incapaces de comprender que la muerte es permanente, universal e inevitable, el niño puede creer que la muerte puede ser evitada, burlada, o incluso revertida. Un niño que conozco me hablo de querer haber hecho algo para que su padre volviera a vivir.

Cuando le pregunté que pensaba que podría haber hecho, su semblante triste desapareció, y una amplia sonrisa iluminó toda su carita: "¡Bueno, yo se kárate!" dijo, y me demostró las dramáticas técnicas que le hubiera gustado usar para ahuyentar a la muerte de la cama de su papá. Cuando los niños perciben a la muerte como un monstruo del cual uno se puede escapar, pueden sentirse inadecuados sobre si mismos y de los adultos que no pudieron escaparse.

Tenemos que ayudarles a los niños chicos a comprender que la muerte le llega eventualmente a todas las cosas vivientes, y cuando ocurre, no hay nada que pueda hacerse. Esto es frecuentemente la primera vez que no pueden revertir algo no deseado. Los niños están acostumbrados a las segundas oportunidades. En los juegos de vídeo hay segundas vidas, y frecuentemente salen con la suya en un sinnúmero de circunstancias. Pero con la muerte esto no puede suceder. Cuando muere un ser querido, o hay una perdida importante, tienen que comprender qué sucedió, porqué, y cual es el significado en esto para ellos.

Qué Hacer: Cuéntenles que pasó con toda la información posible que sea apropiada para su edad y circunstancias. No suponga que no están respondiendo o pensando sobre la tragedia simplemente porque no la están discutiendo. Frecuentemente reconocen los poderosos efectos de la perdida en los seres queridos que los rodean y optan por no hacer preguntas porque creen que estas pueden entristecer a los adultos. En vez de olvidar, generalmente asignan sus propias impresiones en cuanto a lo que ha acontecido.

Qué Decir: Explíquenle a los niños que cuando alguien muere, el cuerpo deja de funcionar y que la persona ya no respira, come, se mueve o hace nada de lo que nosotros típicamente pensamos que sustenta la vida. No describa la muerte como similar al sueño ya que esto puede asustar a los niños en cuanto al sueño.

Evite decir que la persona falleció porque "estaba enferma", e incluso "porque estaba muy vieja". Estar enfermo o viejo están dentro de lo que el niño considera como parte de su propia experiencia y de las de los hermanos mayores y padres. Es mejor decir una frase como: "Generalmente los médicos pueden curar las enfermedades, pero desafortunadamente esta enfermedad no pudo ser curada y el cuerpo simplemente dejó de funcionar". Si la persona era de edad, Ud. puede recordarles que a pesar de que la muerte le llega a todo el mundo, generalmente se espera en los ancianos que han vivido vidas largas y plenas.

Recuerde que los niños pequeños piensan en términos muy concretos. Pueden asustarse con frases como "Lo perdimos..." En vez diga, "Falleció". Evite decir "Se lo llevó Dios", ya que esto puede inducir a los niños a creer que Dios secuestra a las personas, o como me dijo un niño de cinco años "Creo que Dios tiene a mi papi como rehén".

V Duelo: Una vez que los niños comprenden lo que ha sucedido, es normal que experimenten algún tipo de dolor. No trate de silenciar o aliviar el dolor de un niño ofreciéndoles un regalo ("Toma un helado".), transando ("Si dejas de llorar te compro ese juego nuevo".), reprochándolos ("Los niños grandes no lloran".). Es sano que los niños expresen su pena.

La apariencia del dolor de los niños es frecuentemente distinto a la de los adultos. Puede ser episódico, y puede desaparecer momentáneamente, pero siempre estará en el trasfondo. La expresión de sentimientos puede incluir pena, confusión,

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preocupación, apatía o rabia. Expresar esos sentimientos en palabras y contar lo que pasó ayuda a aliviar el dolor de la perdida para los niños y los adultos.

Qué Hacer: Hablar sobre los dibujos que los niños han hecho o representar a través de la actuación lo que ha sucedido puede demostrarnos la comprensión real del niño. Una niñita muy inteligente jugaba a que sus peluches se mataran entre si. Yo estaba perpleja ya que su padre había muerto de una condición cardíaca. Cuando le pregunté, me informó que su padre había muerto de un ataque al corazón, lo que ella comprendió cómo que si alguien hubiese atacado el corazón de su padre. A pesar de que había sido adecuadamente informada sobre la condición de su padre y su muerte, su comprensión de que significaba eso la llevo a la confusión, preocupación, y consternación. Explicar la realidad usando el juego ayuda a los niños pequeños a comprender que pasó y a sentirse más cómodos con la información.

Que Decir. El duelo es una experiencia humana universal; es una respuesta a la perdida de un ser querido. Ya que todos aman, todos están de duelo alguna vez.

V Conmemorar: La conmemoración de la muerte de un ser querido significa reconocer el valor de su vida. Esto se puede hacer de distintas maneras, y los niños pueden proponer maneras creativas y expresivas para conmemorar la vida de su ser querido.

Los adultos se preguntan sobre la inclusión de niños chicos en funerales tradicionales y otras ceremonias de duelo. Muchos suponen que ir a tal evento es automáticamente demasiado triste o aterrador. Estas actividades pueden ser importantes tanto para los niños como para los adultos mientras se recuperan de su perdida.

Qué Hacer: Se le debe preguntar a los niños si quieren ir, pero nunca deben ser obligados a ir o participar de cualquier manera. Si van a un velorio o funeral, deben darse explicaciones completas y apropiadas para la edad sobre exactamente que pueden esperar. Por ejemplo, deben estar preparados sobre que involucra la ceremonia, y cual es el aspecto físico de la sala, cementerio, etc. Se les debe informar sobre el objetivo de la ceremonia y cómo se espera que esta ayude en proceso de alivio de la pena. El mensaje consistente y subyacente debe ser para aumentar el sentimiento de vinculo y control.

Que Decir: Podríamos decirle al niño que el funeral nos da la oportunidad de reunirnos con todos los que querían al difunto para recordar cuan querido era y cuan extrañado va a ser. Nos recuerda cuan agradecidos debemos estar por haber tenido la oportunidad de querer y conocer a esta persona tan especial. La mayoría de la gente va a estar triste porque van a echar de menos a la persona. Muchos pueden llorar, lo que es normal cuando se está triste. Esto es raro para los niños ya que no ven a los adultos llorar muy frecuentemente, pero es comprensible. A los niños se les puede decir que a veces la vida es triste y dolorosa, pero que el dolor se aliviara con el tiempo. El apoyo mutuo de la gente es lo suficientemente fuerte para aliviar el dolor y ayudarnos a seguir adelante.

Qué Pueden Hacer los Niños: A veces los niños honran y recuerdan al ser querido con fotos, dibujos, plantando arboles o actividades que les son familiares y reconfortantes. Los adultos pueden ayudarle a los niños a crear sus propios libros sobre la persona que ha fallecido, o hacer una "caja de los recuerdos" decorando un pequeña caja que contenga fotografías, recuerdos, y otras recuerdos tangibles. No obstante la actividad que se lleve a cabo es importante que los niños conmemoren de una manera que sea significativa y les brinde consuelo. Hacer todas las decisiones puede privar a los niños de lograr esta tarea.

V Seguir Adelante: Esta es una parte importante del duelo: reconocer la perdida, experimentar los sentimientos y seguir adelante.

Qué hacer: A los niños se les debe decir frecuentemente que está bien reírse, jugar, y pasarlo bien. Una parte importante del duelo no es tanto relegar al difunto al pasado, sino encontrar una manera de incorporar esos buenos recuerdos y sentimientos al presente y futuro. Esto incluye hablar sobre el difunto (o incluso hablarles), y continuar sintiendo que se tiene una relación con el ser querido que falleció.

Qué Decir: Tenemos que hablar del difunto en vez de evitar mencionar su nombre. Hable sobre ellos en una conversación típica. O incluso asigne tiempo para pensar o hablar sobre el difunto. Tenemos que decirles a los niños que a pesar de que la pena puede ser muy profunda es importante seguir creciendo. Al vivir cada día en su plenitud honramos a las personas que no están vivas.

Los niños comprenden las tragedias en el contexto de sus propias experiencias vitales. Se preocupan de como esto pudo suceder, si sucederá otra vez, y si van a estar seguros y bien cuidados. Necesitan que se les de confianza, con comentarios que respondan a sus preocupaciones reales. También es muy útil ser lo más consistente y previsible posible durante y después de su perdida. Los niños responden con desconcierto cuando se les manda a donde vecinos o parientes bien intencionados sin comprender adecuadamente la naturaleza, razones, y expectativas de estos cambios.

Los niños (y los adultos) tienen que ser recordados que la perdida puede ser superada. El vigor, incluso la capacidad de crecer y prosperar en la adversidad solo viene de estar expuesto a la adversidad, y no de su ausencia. A medida que los niños observan el amor y la sensación de comunidad que frecuentemente es el resultado de la muerte de un ser querido, aprenden valiosas lecciones que frecuentemente están ausentes de su vida cotidiana. Aprenden que la vida es única y valiosa, que el amor humano puede consolar, que se puede contar en los adultos para comprender y apoyar a los niños que están de duelo, y, finalmente, que podemos emerger de la tristeza para crecer, ser felices, y apreciar la alegría y la vida.

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NEWSLETTER

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THE DOs AND DON'Ts OF DISCIPLINE

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A young child refuses to put her dirty clothes in the hamper. Mom admonishes her and lets her know she is being very disobedient. After two warnings that go unheeded a swat on the backside and a stern "Go to your room until you're ready to do what you're told to do, young lady!" is the final act in this scene. Mom feels frustrated but vindicated. After all, children have to learn to do what they are told to do. Her daughter feels angry that she's been treated unfairly. After all, she was busy and Mom was being unreasonable. Mom doesn't always do what she's supposed to do!

A toddler is exploring his environment, as toddlers are programmed to do. What does he see sticking out of the wall, but a funny-looking doodad with a long rope hanging out of it. He pulls on the rope and out comes a little gadget with two things sticking out that seem to fit snugly into two holes in the wall. What is a toddler to do but try to put the two things back into their holes? Dad, observing his son's discovery, rushes over, grabs the boy by his arms, slaps his hand and yells, "Don't play with this! What do you want to do ... electrocute yourself?" Upon which the toddler begins to wail and scream, looking apprehensive and wondering what that was all about. After all, he was just being curious. But parents need their children to be safe and stay away from things that can hurt them.

A four-year-old boy finds a book of matches. Having seen grownups light matches, he thinks it would be great fun to see if he can make a fire just like his family did when they went camping. Finding some sticks to burn outside, he starts his little campfire only to be caught in the act by his startled parents. His father, remembering how he learned not to play with matches as a little boy, holds his son's fingers over a burning match for a few seconds. His son, screaming in pain, learns that you can be burned by fire. If children don't learn the dangers of fire, the whole house may go up in flames. "Where there's pain, there's gain," his father always told him.

These are just three of the many situations played out by parents and children across America as parents attempt to teach their children to respect authority, to be safe, and to make good choices. How we raise our children makes all the difference in whether or not our goals become their realities.

Before we discuss how these situations could have turned out immeasurably better for everyone, let's examine some of the elements of effective discipline.

Creating Discipline in the Home

The very first step is answering the question: "What do I want my children to learn?" It sounds simple enough, but unless we're clear about what we want our children to learn, what can we possibly teach? To help identify what you want your children to learn, you and your partner must become aware of your beliefs, values, and family traditions. All of these are important components of the parenting practice of discipline.

Morals: Our beliefs in the rights and wrongs of living. An example of a moral is "Don't take things that aren't yours; do ask and receive permission first." This could lead to : "Don't shoplift: do pay for the things you want." Morals form the fabric of discipline: Don't lie, tell the truth; Share your things, don't hoard them; treat others with respect. These messages help children develop a moral code.

Values: The beliefs we hold that have worth. If "Do not steal: pay for things" is a family moral, and if children

THIS IS A WONDERFUL DRAWING!

observe their parents stealing from their place of employment or shoplifting, then the moral has no value. Or if a child is observed taking something but parents choose to ignore the behavior, the child also quickly learns that the moral has no value. The statements, "I've told you a thousand times not to steal," or "You know stealing is bad" are common expressions of the sad situation where children know right from wrong, but the knowledge carries no value and the moral is not part of the child's life.

Family Traditions: The generational passing of cultural celebrations, stories, feasts and holidays; the food, music, and rituals that define a clan, tribe or family. Very few parents regard these traditions as discipline yet we expect children to carry them on to the next generation. If the child needs to learn it, the parent needs to teach it.

After you've decided what you want yourchildren to learn, the next step is to turn your information into family rules.

Establishing Family Rules

Family rules put into practice the morals, values, and traditions of the family. Notice these are rules for the *family*, not just rules for children. When parents practice what they preach, children have an easier time following the rules.

In setting up family rules, children need to be the main contributors. Children learn best through self-discovery. When they contribute to setting up family rules, their ownership of the rules motivates them to follow the rules.

Many families do this informally, as situations arise. But if this doesn't work and a child's behavior becomes a problem, try a more formal process (See Family Rules).

Consequences for Family Rules

For family rules to have meaning, some action has to occur when the rules are followed and when the rules are purposely broken. These consequences can be either positive (rewards) or negative (penalties).

Rewards

Praise: Children love recognition when they are doing a good job following the rules. Praise from parents is the most powerful reward children can possibly receive.

Nurturing Touch: Touch is a basic need of all human beings. It is absolutely essential for children. Nurturing touch communicates trust, warmth and love; the basic ingredients of a healthy parent-child relationship. Coupled with praise, the two make a powerful statement of appreciation.

Objects: Tangible rewards like stars, stickers, points can be used occasionally to reinforce behavior, but such rewards are supplements to praise and nurturing touch and should never be their substitute.

Privileges: Extra time staying up, or a special trip to the zoo are wonderful rewards to use as special privileges.

Penalties

Time out: Perhaps the most widely used, and misused penalty, time out, will work only when time in is quality time. Time out is used for major infractions, and its use should be limited for children 2 years and older (other disciplinary strategies, mentioned later, should be employed before using time out). In its simplest form, time out is the systematic removal of a child to a quiet place as a consequence for misbehavior. Since bedrooms are used as a place of rest and a sanctuary from the daily demands of life (even for a preschooler), bedrooms are not recommended as places of punishment.

Being Grounded: The punishment must fit the crime. If a child leaves the yard without permission, he is grounded (to the yard, to the house etc.) for a short time. The younger the child, the shorter the grounding. The emotional impact makes it effective, not the length of time.

> ***When parents express their disappointment, it should NEVER be of the child, and it should ALWAYS be only of the child's choice of behavior.***

Restitution: If you break it, you fix it or replace it. If you mess it up, you clean it up. If you hurt someone, you apologize. Studies have shown that when children observe their parents modeling the use of restitution, the children demonstrate higher levels of empathy with their own peers.

Loss of privilege: If you misuse it, you lose it (but for a short time). If you throw the toy, you lose the privilege of playing with it for awhile.

Parental Disappointment: When parents express their disappointment, it should NEVER be of the child, and it should ALWAYS be of the children's choice of behavior. Letting the child know that a parent is disappointed in their choice of behavior sends a message to the child that their choices affect others. Used too often, however, expressing disappointment can create overwhelming feelings of guilt and anger which will ultimately backfire with the children distancing themselves from their parents.

Discipline as Behavior Encouragement

Several proven techniques can help build cooperative and caring children.

Choices: Choices reduce power struggles and increase cooperation. It is an excellent way to help children use their power in a positive way. "Son, would you like your milk in a green cup, or a red cup?" "Delacy, do you want to wear your blue dress, or your polka dot dress?"

Although providing choices is an excellent technique, never give choices when there aren't any. If you cannot accept a "no" response, don't offer a choice. Don't say "Zachary, turn off the tv, ok?" which invites an answer. Instead say "Zachary, please turn off the tv and get ready for bed." Rather than asking "Jesse, would you like to get your coat on now?" say "Jesse, please get your coat and put it on."

Redirection: Children are naturally curious, but sometimes their curiosity can put them in unsafe situations. Taking away a dangerous object and substituting a safe one is a good way to redirect the child's attention. Interest in an uncapped electric socket can be easily reduced to interest in a bag of clothespins or rattles. Then, put a safety cap on the outlet, and any others within reach of your child.

Power Stories: Especially when told at night, power stories are a beautiful way to help children make the transition to sleep. A power story is a summary of the day's events about positive things that happened. Children love it when parents name the story after them: "This is the story of Carson and his powerful day."

Transition Time: Nobody likes to be interrupted and told to do something immediately, particularly young children who often have difficulty switching from one activity to another. Transition time provides an opportunity for children to prepare to change activities. "Adam, in five minutes it will be time to get ready for bed." "Julia, when your cartoon is finished, it will be time to get dressed."

Cooperation: Very few experiences create joy for a parent like a child who is cooperating. When children to do so willingly, they are sending a strong message that they find value in the requested behavior.

Cooperation should be stressed throughout the day. "Rachel, I need you to cooperate and take your dish to the sink." "John, please cooperate and feed Cookie a dog biscuit. She looks hungry." Then, follow up with praise. "Thanks so much for cooperating. You did an excellent job taking your dish to the sink." "Cookie says 'thank you' for the dog biscuit, and I thank you for cooperating."

Although they seem similar, cooperation is dramatically different from obedience. Many parents want absolute obedience. Children are expected to do what they are told when they are told to do it. Obedience requires no decision-making, negotiation, or discussion. It also gets many kids stuck in peer situations. We teach out children to say "no" to dangerous and unhealthy behaviors, but "no" can't help obedient children if they obediently follow their peer group.

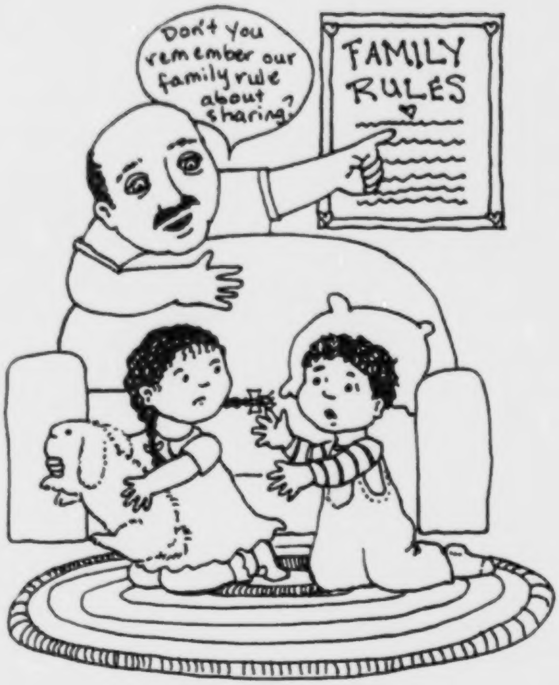
Discipline is about teaching children self-control, making good choices, and cooperating. Cooperation, working together as a family, is a powerful value to instill in children, and it occurs when there is a basic agreement between parent and child to be in harmony with each other. True cooperation rarely happens when a relationship is characterized by power struggles and a lack of mutual respect.

Humor and Fun: Not only are humor and fun extremely effective cooperation inducers and stress reducers, their use also encourages bonding between parent and child. Bathtubs that call the child to get in, a pair of slippers that chase a child's toes around the kitchen begging to be on, or parents who race children up the stairs to change into their soccer clothes before a game are all enjoyable ways to encourage cooperation. Sure, it takes some ingenuity and a little extra energy to create humorous ways to encourage cooperative behavior, but it is a lot more enjoyable than spending time in relentless power struggles. Parenting doesn't have to be the most difficult task adults encounter unless they choose to make it so.

Using these Strategies

Now, let's re-examine the situations presented at the beginning of the article. Family rules about cooperation in completing tasks would make a definite improvement with the young child reluctant to put her clothes in the hamper. Time out would be a better choice of a penalty for the uncooperative child than hitting her. When she was ready to put her dirty clothes in the hamper, she could come out. Making a game of getting clothes into the hamper, or a choice to do it now, or in 10 minutes, after she is done playing could have avoided a power struggle. Allowing time for a transition and reminding her about the need to cooperate with Family Rules may also have been helpful.

With the toddler exploring the electric socket, a written rule would be way beyond his comprehension, but being hit isn't the answer. The young child loses all association between the electric socket and danger, but in its place gains a vivid association of Daddy and getting hurt. Instead, saying "No! That's an Owwee that can hurt you son!" and redirection to safer objects to explore, helps the child associate sockets with "Owwees." It also points out the need for parents to danger-proof the house of unsafe objects.


Don't you remember our family rule about sharing?
FAMILY RULES

Finally, holding a burning match under a child's fingers to teach the danger of fire teaches an immense fear of Dad, not to mention that purposely burning a child is actual physical abuse. Children can legitimately be taught the dangers of fire without hurting them. Parents modeling the safe use of matches is critical. Allowing young children to be involved in gathering dry leaves or kindling for an outdoor campfire allows them to feel included in a safe activity involving the use of fire. Older children can light the dinner candles with mom or dad supervising the activity. Having clear family rules and consequences regarding the use of matches is critical.

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FAMILY RULES

The first step in establishing Family Rules is to gather everyone around the kitchen table with a large sheet of paper and a marker. Label the paper Family Rules for the *your Family Name here* Family. Divide the paper in half, drawing a line down the center. Label one side "Do's" and the other side "Don'ts." For every "Don't" behavior there needs to be a "Do" behavior. This not only tells the child what she shouldn't do, but also what she should do.

Suppose one of the problems in the family has to do with sharing. The goal is for the child to contribute to developing that rule. Ask your child leading questions such as "Janice, what rule should we have about sharing our toys?" Wait for Janice to respond. If she states, "Toys should be shared," make a big deal out of it, particularly if she is the one who most needs the rule. If she doesn't come up with a rule, prompt her, "Do you think we should share our things or keep them only to ourselves, like when you wanted to borrow Mommy's hand cream? Should I share it with you or say, 'No, you can't have it! It's mine!' What do you think?" You may want to discuss that not all things have to be shared, like expensive perfume, favorite toys and clothes.

Having some things that are not on the "share list" can provide children with a sense of comfort and trust.

As family members begin to follow certain rules consistently, reward everyone with a party to celebrate that it is no longer necessary for a rule to be posted. It's a great way to show success.

Spanking: Does It Work?

Are there any damaging effects? These questions have no exact answers. Even professionals disagree about the value of spanking.

✦ What Happens When You Spank

A spanking can result in good behavior just as a candy bar can buy peace and quiet in the supermarket. Using candy to quiet a tantrum is a temporary solution. So is spanking. A child who is spanked will usually settle down and behave. After a while, the child acts up again. The parent spanks again because the spanking seemed to work the first time. The child is good for a while and then misbehaves again. The parent spanks again, and so on.

This pattern occurs because spanking provides external control of children. It does not encourage children to make responsible decisions. It does not promote internal decision making. Many children believe that once they have been spanked everything is okay. "We are even." Spanking causes many children to focus on the punishment rather than on their poor decision.

Spankings have side effects. They are embarrassing. Embarrassment causes children to get angry or think about retaliation. Many children who are spanked have poor self-esteem. Some children withdraw. Others become excitable, overactive and aggressive. It seldom teaches children to think about how they could have made a better decision.

✦ Three Ways Parents Use Spanking

There are three ways that parents use spanking to punish their children: the impulsive approach; the angry approach; and, the planned approach.

▲ The Impulsive Approach:

The impulsive approach is more commonly used with younger children. These parents are never really serious about the actual swat. It's almost automatic or reflexive. The child hollers and then goes about playing. The impulsive approach has no lasting effect on a child's misbehavior. After being spanked on the backside a few dozen times, the swat becomes meaningless. Far too often, the spanking depends on how the parent feels at that given moment. If you are short tempered today, your children get spanked for every little thing they do. If you are feeling more tolerant, your children get away with murder. This inconsistency confuses children.

Children who are impulsively and frequently spanked believe that hitting is a normal part of life. So when another child does something they do not like, they hit. This becomes a problem with siblings, at school and with playmates. Children who are frequently spanked believe that everything they do is wrong. This creates poor self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence.

The impulsive approach is not an effective punishment because it does not minimize the need for future spankings. Instead, it perpetuates the need for spankings. Frequent spankings model negative behavior. They are reactive. Parents who use the impulsive approach seldom use positive remedies to change misbehavior.

▲ The Angry Approach:

The second way that parents use spanking is the angry approach. While this approach is the most common, it is also the most harmful. When you become angry and spank your child, a number of problems result. You teach your child how to "push your button." This teaches your child that his misbehavior has power over you and your self-control.

When you spank in anger, you create intense negative emotions. You create these emotions in yourself, your child and the rest of the family. Many children begin to fear their parents. Spanking in anger teaches children to strike out when they are angry. It teaches children that they do not have to exercise self-control, because you do not show self-control. Spanking in anger does not teach children how to make better decisions. When you spank in anger, you are often vengeful. You let your frustration build until it explodes. Then, you retaliate with revenge, sometimes humiliating and embarrassing your child. When you spank in anger, you could become carried away and may hurt your child.

▲ The Planned Approach:

The third way that some parents use spanking is the planned approach. This means that you tell your child that certain misbehaviors will result in a swat. However, consider these factors before you use the planned approach.

There is no evidence to show that planned spankings teach children to be more responsible. Planned spankings still model negative behavior. If you allow yourself to spank, you may get angry when you spank. You may use spanking inconsistently because of your mood or because you feel guilty. Inconsistency makes the problem worse. Many parents forget that a plan should include positive solutions. They plan to use a spanking as a punishment, but do not plan positive strategies. They forget that the plan should emphasize the positive and not the negative.

✦ Summary

You can raise self-disciplined children without spanking. Spanking may be a good release for your anger or frustration. However, it is a temporary solution that does not teach responsibility. The goal, as parents, is to teach children about how to make better behavioral decisions and how to take responsibility for their actions.

This information on spanking was excerpted from Dr. Sal Severe's new book "How To Behave So Your Children Will Too!" – a Parents' Choice Foundation Award Winner & Book of the Month Club popular selection. for more information about Dr. Severe's book or workshops call 1-800-868-5208. For a free one year subscription to Dr. Severe's newsletter, "Parenting Today", write Greentree Publishing; P.O. Box 27672; Tempe, Az. 85285-7672 or visit http://www.howtobehave.com.

THE DOCTORS' CORNER

Colds and Remedies

The common cold is a viral infection and the most common infectious condition affecting children. Preschoolers have an average of 5 to 8 colds a year. They often occur more frequently during winter months and less frequently in summer.

Many viral infections, including colds, tend to be epidemic in nursery schools and daycare centers where children are in close contact with each other. For poorly understood reasons, the frequency and severity of colds vary considerably from child to child and in the same youngster from time to time.

The common cold is a self-limited disease, running its course even without treatment. It is caused by a variety of viruses for which there is no specific therapy. Symptoms can last one to two weeks and consist primarily of runny nose, nasal congestion, cough and low-grade fever of less than 39 degrees C or 102.2 degrees F. In addition, occasional sneezing, mild aches, chills and scratchy throat may occur. The use of antibiotics does not affect the course of the illness that is viral in origin, or prevent the incidence of bacterial complications.

Most of the distress is due to nasal stuffiness, which can interfere with sleep, or with fluid and food intake, especially in young infants who often breathe through their noses. In older children, nasal congestion leads to mouth breathing and consequently drying of the throat, which increases the sensation of soreness. Fast breathing or difficult breathing can be a sign of lower respiratory infection requiring prompt medical attention.

The use of a suction bulb, after instillation of saline drops (mix 1/4 tsp. table salt with 6 ounces water) 2-3 drops in each nostril, can be used to remove the secretions if the child is unable to blow. A humidifier may prevent drying of secretions. Fluids of the child's choice, if tolerated, should be offered at frequent intervals to assure your child doesn't become dehydrated. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is usually helpful in relieving the discomfort caused by fever and aching.

More than 800 over-the-counter (OTC) cold remedies are available for treatment of the common cold. Each year Americans spend 1 to 2 billion dollars on these medications. Despite their frequent use, however, little research has been conducted on OTC medications given to children. Most studies focus on adults and demonstrate relief of symptoms but no shortening of the course of the illness.

Different kinds of cold remedies are available; you should carefully read the label and use them as directed:

➤ **Oral or topical decongestants** in children older than 2 years of age are used for the relief of stuffed nose. The topical preparations, nasal sprays and drops, must not be used for more than 3 to 5 days to avoid rebound congestion in which the congestion becomes worse when the medication is stopped.

➤ **Cough suppressants** are rarely appropriate, especially if the child has a wet cough producing phlegm. This cough reflex is thought to be protective and helpful in clearing out the congestion. However, if the cough prevents your child from sleeping, one of these antitussive preparations may be helpful at bedtime.

➤ **Expectorants/mucolytics** have been shown to loosen the secretions which help carry the mucus towards the upper airways by coughing. Their usefulness alone, or with a cough suppressant is unclear.

Finally, the cost and side effects of these medications, such as drowsiness, excessive drying caused by some combination preparations, nose irritation due to prolonged use of nasal sprays or drops, and also accidental overdose can be avoided when we do not attempt to treat this self-limited disease which will eventually resolve on its own. Treatment should be mainly supportive.

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DEAR READER

Discipline – it's one of our most requested topics for a feature. This month, we're delighted to be able to share with you the advice and wisdom of Stephen and Juliana Bavolek.

Because no discussion of discipline seems to be complete without a discussion of spanking, we've included that too.

I'm human, and I've lost my temper from time to time, whacked a padded bottom perhaps, but I consider that to be a regrettable loss of self-control on my part, and not a rational approach to parenting. Parents often rationalize their behavior by saying that "It didn't hurt my child any. (S)he still grew up fine." But children sometimes grow up in spite of our limitations and short-comings, not because of them. Dr. Sal Severe talks about why spanking isn't an effective discipline technique. It only creates fear and anger. The Bavoleks show us a better way.

Well, I'll get off my soap box now and remind you to check out the Doctor's Corner for important information on children and colds, and the library resources with books for parents and children.

Neale Schwartzberg

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Parent Resources

🕮 ***365 Wacky, Wonderful Ways to Get Your Children to Do What You Want*** by Elizabeth Crary; illustrated by Dave Garbot; Parenting Press, Inc.; Seattle, Washington; 1995; Softcover, $9.95. Imagine facing a child who throws food, is fascinated with sharp knives, hits the baby, whines, and other behaviors which drive parents crazy. Now, imagine facing those situations armed with a book explaining why your youngster is doing that, clarifying what you want to have happen, and offering a dozen tips and techniques for achieving your goal. Feel better? Also contains sensible "tools" for effective parenting.

🕮 ***Children Learn What They Live: Parenting to inspire values*** by Dorothy Law Nolte and Rachel Harris; Workman Publishing; New York; 1998; Softcover, $8.95. There is no shortage of books on parenting and discipline. But, there is one book which every parent should have as they leave the hospital with their new baby. If you have seen the poem *Children Learn What They Live*, you'll know the heart of this book. Written by the author of that poem, and her co-writer, this book brims with wisdom.

🕮 ***Positive Discipline for Preschoolers*** by Jane Nelsen, Cheryl Erwin, and Roslyn Duffy; Prima Publishing; Rocklin, CA; 1995; Softcover, $14.00. The subtitle of this book tells it all: "raising children who are responsible, respectful and resourceful". A wide range of topics are covered with a gentle yet informative approach.

Books For Parents and Children

🕮 ***Because You're Lucky*** by Irene Smalls; illustrated by Michael Hays; Little, Brown and Company; New York; 1997; Hardcover $15.95. Jonathan isn't happy when his cousin comes to live with his family. Kevin comes with no luggage or other possessions and Jonathan must share everything. When Jonathan asks why, his mother tells him "Because you are lucky." This is a simple story of how families come together in many ways with love and understanding.

📼 ***Big Bird Gets Lost***; Sony Wonder Video, 1997; 1/2 hour $12.98. It's not hard to get lost, so Maria and Big Bird tell children what to do when that happens. A song to remember your phone number is easy and the message to parents at the end is clear and won't scare little ones.

🕮 ***Dry Days, Wet Nights*** by Maribeth Boelts; illustrated by Kathy Parkinson; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 1994; Softcover $5.95. It takes time for Little Bunny to develop nighttime control, but his parents are understanding. One night, he stays dry. A sweet and gentle book about bedwetting, a behavior which is stressful for little children and parents.

🕮 ***Faraway Drums*** by Virginia Kroll; illustrated by Floyd Cooper; Little, Brown and Company; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. What do you do when you are the child of a single parent who has to leave you and your sister alone at night in an apartment? There are neighbors who will help them, but when loud noises scare them, Jamila tells her sister stories, in which the noises of the city become the sounds of Africa.

🕮 ***It's Going to Be Perfect!*** by Nancy Carlson; Viking; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. Raising children is never what we expect it to be, but we can still enjoy the process. A book reminding parents and children that raising children can be a joy.

🕮 ***Leo the Late Bloomer*** by Robert Kraus; pictures by Jose Aruego; Windmill Books/HarperFestival; New York; 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. Leo is a tiger who is clearly a late bloomer. He can't read, draw, or even talk. His parents are patient and one day, Leo blooms. The wonderful illustrations add to the message that all children develop at their own pace.

🕮 ***Little Louie and Baby Bloomer*** by Robert Kraus; pictures by Jose Aruego & Ariane Dewey; HarperCollins; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $15.95. Leo is now the older brother faced with Little Louie who can't pull a wagon, eat neatly, or do any of the things Leo can do. Same sweet message and warm illustrations. Perfect for the older brother impatient with his sibling.

🕮 ***My Own Big Bed*** by Anna Grossnickle Hines; pictures by Mary Watson; Greenwillow Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. The transition to a big bed makes a little girl nervous. She imagines all that could go wrong (she could fall out) and the solutions (pile pillows all around the bed). A big bed also means room for mom and dad to read stories and give her hugs and kisses.

🕮 ***Sit Still!*** by Nancy Carlson; Puffin Books; New York; 1996; Softcover, $5.99. "Patrick knew 101 different ways to sit in a chair." Patrick is a fine, healthy boy, but he just can't sit still, and everyone tells him to do just that. But when his mother gives him things to do, and Patrick learns to use all that energy, he finds a good side to not sitting still.

🕮 ***Today I Feel Silly*** by Jamie Lee Curtis; illustrated by Laura Cornell; Joanna Cotler Books; New York; 1998; Hardcover, $$15.95. "Today I feel silly. Mom says it's the heat. I put rouge on the cat and gloves on my feet," begins this whimsical story of a little girl and her moods told in rhyme. An excellent spring-board for talks about moods and the experiences which produce children's different feelings.

🕮

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

NEWSLETTER

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LO QUE SE "DEBE" Y "NO DEBE" HACER SOBRE LA DISCIPLINA

Una pequeña niña rehusa poner su ropa usada en el canasto de la ropa sucia. Mamá la amonesta y le deja saber que está siendo muy desobediente. Después de dos advertencias que han sido ignoradas, una palmada en las asentaderas y una dura, "¡Vete a tu pieza hasta que estés lista a hacer lo que te dicen, jovencita!", es el acto final de esta escena. Mamá se siente frustrada pero vindicada. Después de todo, los niños tienen que aprender a hacer lo que se les dice. Su hija se siente furiosa porque ha sido tratada injustamente. Al final de cuentas, ella estaba ocupada y mamá estaba siendo poco razonable. ¡Mamá no siempre hace lo que tiene que hacer!

Un niño explora su ambiente, tal como los niños están programados a hacer. ¿Qué es lo que ve saliendo de la pared, si no es una curiosa cosa con un largo cordón colgando? Él tira de el y sale un pequeño artefacto con dos cosas que sobresalen, que parecen encajar perfectamente en los hoyos en la pared. ¿Qué va a hacer un niño sino tratar de poner esas dos cosas de vuelta en sus hoyos? El papá, observando el descubrimiento de su hijo, corre hacia él, ase al muchacho por sus brazos, le da una palmada en la mano y le grita, "¡No juegues con eso! ¿Qué quieres hacer... electrocutarte?" Con esto el niño comienza a llorar y a gritar, se pone aprensivo y se pregunta que es lo que pasa. Despues de todo, él sólo estaba siendo curioso. Pero los padres necesitan que sus niños estén lejos y a salvo de cosas que los pueden lastimar.

Un niño de cuatro años encuentra una caja de fósforos. Como ha visto a los mayores encender fósforos, piensa que sería muy interesante ver si él puede hacer una fogata igual a la que su familia hizo cuando fueron a acampar. El niño encuentra algunos trozos de madera para quemar afuera, y comienza su pequeña fogata, pero es sorprendido en el acto por sus sorprendidos padres. Su padre, recordando como él aprendió a no jugar con fósforos cuando era pequeño, pone los dedos de su hijo sobre un fósforo encendido por unos segundos. Su hijo, gritando de dolor, aprende que el fuego puede quemar. Si los niños no aprenden los peligros del fuego, la casa entera puede arder en llamas. "Donde hay dolor, hay ganancia," su padre siempre le dijo.

Estas son solo tres de las muchas situaciones llevadas a cabo por padres y niños a traves de los Estados Unidos a medida que los padres intentan enseñarle a sus niños a respetar la autoridad, estar a salvo, y tomar buenas decisiones. La manera en que criamos a nuestros niños hace toda la diferencia en si nuestras metas llegan a ser sus realidades o no. Antes de discutir como estas situaciones podrían haber sido inmensamente mejor para todos, examinemos algunos principios muy básicos de como ser un padre efectivo, específicamente los elementos de la disciplina.

Crear Disciplina en el Hogar

El primerísimo paso es contestar la pregunta: "¿Qué es lo que quiero que mis niños aprendan?" Suena bastante simple, pero a menos que tengamos claro lo que queremos que nuestros niños aprendan, ¿qué es lo que posiblemente podemos enseñarles? Para ayudarlo a identificar lo que usted quiere que sus niños aprendan, usted y su pareja deben estar conscientes de cuales son sus creencias, las tradiciones de la familia y sus valores. Todo estos son importantes componentes de la práctica de la disciplina de los padres.

Las reglas éticas: Es lo que creemos con respecto a lo que es correcto e incorrecto en el diario vivir. Un ejemplo de una regla ética es "no tomar cosas que no son tuyas; pide y recibe permiso primero." Esto podría conducir a: "no robar cosas de las tiendas: paga por las cosas que quieres." La ética forma la entretela de la disciplina: no mientas, di la verdad; comparte tus cosas, no las acapares; trata a otros con respeto. Estos mensajes ayudan a los niños a desarrollar un código moral.

THIS IS A WONDERFUL DRAWING!

Valores: Las creencias que nosotros tenemos que tienen valor. Si "no robes: paga por las cosas" es una regla ética familiar, y los niños ven a sus padres que sacan cosas de su lugar de trabajo o que escamotean cosas de la tienda, entonces las reglas éticas no tienen valor. O si un niño es observado tomando algo pero los padres deciden ignorar su comportamiento, el niño aprenderá rápidamente que las reglas éticas no tienen valor. Los alegatos, "Te he dicho mil veces que no debes robar," o "Tú sabes que robar es malo" son expresiones comunes de la triste situación en la que los niños distinguen entre el bien y el mal, pero el conocimiento no tiene valor y la moral no es parte de la vida del niño.

Las tradiciones familiares: La transmición generacional de celebraciones culturales, historias, festejos y fiestas; las comidas, música y rituales que definen un clan, tribu o familia. Muy pocos padres ven estas tradiciones como una disciplina y sin embargo esperamos que nuestros niños las transmitan a la próxima generación. Si el niño necesita aprenderlo, el padre necesita enseñarlo.

Después que haya decidido lo que usted quiere que sus niños aprendan, el próximo paso es convertir esta información en reglas para de la familia.

Estableciendo Reglas para la Familia

Las reglas de una familia ponen en práctica la ética, los valores, y las tradiciones de la familia. Nótese que estas son reglas para la familia, no sólo para los niños. Cuando los padres practican lo que ellos predican, a los niños les es más fácil seguir las reglas.

Al establecer reglas para la familia, los niños necesitan ser los principales contribuyentes. Los niños aprenden mejor mediante el auto-descubrimiento. Cuando ellos contribuyen al establecimiento de reglas para la familia, el ser los autores de las reglas los motiva a seguirlas.

Muchas familias hacen esto informalmente, a medida que se presentan las situaciones. Pero si esto no funciona y el comportamiento de un niño llega a ser un problema, trate un proceso más formal (ver más adelante Reglas para la Familia).

Consecuencias de las Reglas para la Familia

Para que las reglas para la familia tengan significando, algo tiene que ocurrir cuando las reglas se siguen o cuando se rompen intencionalmente. Estas consecuencias pueden ser positivas (recompensas) o negativas (castigos).

Premios

Elogios: Los niños aprecian el reconocimiento cuando hacen un buen trabajo al seguir las reglas. Para los niños, la alabanza de los padres es la mayor recompensa que es posible recibir.

Contacto Sustentador: El contacto físico es una necesidad básica de todos los seres humanos. Para los niños es absolutamente esencial. El contacto sustentador comunica confianza, calidez y amor; ingredientes básicos de un relación saludable padre-niño. Acoplado con la alabanza, estos forman una poderosa declaración de apreciación.

Objetos: Recompensas tangibles como estrellas, etiquetas o puntos pueden usarse ocasionalmente para reforzar el comportamiento, pero tales recompensas son un suplemento a los elogios y el contacto sustentador y nunca deberían ser un sustituto.

Privilegios: Tiempo extra antes de acostarse, o un viaje especial al zoológico son recompensas maravillosas para usar como privilegios especiales.

Los castigos Penitencia: Quizás el castigo más ampliamente usado, y abusado, es poner en "penitencia" a un niño por un tiempo determinado. Esto funciona sólo cuando el tiempo de penitencia es tiempo de calidad. La penitencia debe ser usado para infracciones mayores, y su uso debería limitarse a niños de 2 años o más (otras estrategias disciplinarias, mencionadas más adelante, deberían ser empleados antes de usar la penitencia). En su forma más simple, la penitencia es la remoción sistemática de un niño a un lugar tranquilo como una consecuencia de un mal comportamiento. Debido a que los dormitorios son usados como un lugar de descanso y un santuario de las demandas diarias de la vida (hasta para un pre-escolar), los dormitorios no son recomendadas como lugares para cumplir la penitencia.

"Anclar", o restricción de actividades (especialmente sociales): El castigo debe ser conmensurable con el crimen. Si un niño deja el jardín sin permiso, él es restringido a quedarse "anclado" en un lugar (el jardín, la casa etc.) por un corto tiempo. Cuanto más joven el niño, más corto el tiempo de castigo. El impacto emocional es lo que lo hace efectivo, no la longitud de tiempo.

Restitución: Si lo rompes, tú lo arreglas o lo reemplazas. Si lo desordenas, lo limpias. Si lastimas a alguien, te disculpas. Los estudios han mostrado que cuando los niños ven a sus padres como modelos del uso de la restitución, los niños demuestran niveles más altos de empatía con sus propios compañeros.

Pérdida de privilegios: Si lo abusas, lo pierdes (pero por un tiempo corto). Si tiras el juguete, pierdes el privilegio de jugar con el por un tiempo.

Desilusión Paternal: Cuando los padres expresan su desilusión, NUNCA debería ser por el niño mismo sino SIEMPRE por el comportamiento del niño. Dejar saber al niño que un padre se ha desilusionado del comportamiento envía un mensaje al niño de que sus decisiones afectan a otros. Usado demasiado frecuentemente, sin embargo, expresar desilusión puede crear sentimientos abrumadores de culpabilidad y de rabia que en definitiva resultará en que los niños se distanciarán de sus padres.

La Disciplina como Estímulo del Comportamiento

Varias técnicas probadas pueden ayudar a criar niños cooperadores y solícitos.

Opciones: Las opciones reducen las pugnas de poder e incrementan la cooperación. Es una manera óptima de ayudar a los niños a usar su poder de una manera positiva. "Hijo, ¿te gustaría tu leche en una taza verde, o una roja?" "Anita, ¿quieres ponerte tu vestido azul, o tu vestido de puntos?"

Aunque proveer opciones es una técnica óptima, nunca ofrezca elecciones cuando en realidad no las hay. Si no puede aceptar un "no" como respuesta, no ofrezca una opción. No diga, "Fermín, apaga la tv, ¿ok?", que invita una respuesta. En vez diga, "Fermín, por favor apaga la tv y prepárate para irte a dormir". En vez de preguntar, "Juan, ¿podrías ponerte tu abrigo ahora?" diga, "Juan, por favor ponte el abrigo ahora".

Desviar la Atención: Los niños son naturalmente curiosos, pero a veces su curiosidad los puede poner en situaciones de peligro. Quitarle un objeto peligroso y sustituirlo por uno seguro es una buena manera de desviar la atención del niño. El interés en un enchufe eléctrico puede ser fácilmente reducido a un interés en una bolsa de pinzas para tender la ropa o cascabeles. Después ponga una tapa de seguridad en todos los enchufes que estén al alcance de sus niños.

Historias sobre el Poder: Especialmente cuando son contadas de noche, las historias sobre el poder son una hermosa manera de ayudar a los niños a hacer la transición a dormir. Una historia sobre el poder es un resumen de las cosas positivas que han sucedido durante el día. A los niños les encanta cuando padres bautizan la historia con su nombre: "Esta es la historia de Jorge y su poderoso día".

Tiempo de Transición: A nadie le gusta ser interrumpido y que le digan que tiene que hacer algo inmediatamente, particularmente los niños pequeños, que frecuentemente tienen dificultad para cambiar de una actividad a otra. El tiempo de transición provee una oportunidad para que los niños se preparen a cambiar de actividad. "Adam, en cinco minutos va a ser hora de prepararse para la cama". "Julia, cuando termine tu programa de caricaturas, será hora de vestirte".

La Cooperación: Muy pocas experiencias crean tanto regocijo a un padre como cuando un niño coopera. Cuando los niños lo hacen de buena gana, están enviándo un poderoso mensaje; que encuentran valor en el comportamiento pedido. La cooperación debería acentuarse a lo largo del día. "Raquel, necesito que colabores y lleves tu plato al lavaplatos". "Juan, por favor colabora y dale una galleta a Poncho. Se ve hambriento". Y luego siga con una alabanza. "Muchas gracias por colaborar. Hiciste un óptimo trabajo llevando tu plato al lavaplatos". "Poncho dice 'gracias' por la galleta, y yo te agradezco la colaboración".

Aunque parecen similares, la cooperación es dramáticamente diferente de la obediencia. Muchos padres quieren obediencia absoluta. Se espera que los niños hagan lo que se les pide cuando se les pide. La obediencia no requiere decisiones, negociación, o discusión. También deja pegados a muchos niños en situaciones difíciles con sus compañeros. Nosotros le enseñamos a nuestros niños a decir "no" a comportamientos malsanos y peligrosos, pero un "no" no puede ayudar a los niños obedientes, si ellos obedientemente siguen a sus compañeros de grupo.

La disciplina implica enseñarle a los niños auto-control, a elegir bien, y a cooperar. La cooperación, trabajar juntos como familia, es un poderoso valor para inculcar en los niños, y ocurre cuando hay un acuerdo básico entre los padres y el niño de estar en armonía entre sí. La verdadera cooperación rara vez sucede cuando una relación es caracterizada por pugnas de poder y una carencia de mutuo respeto.

Humor y Diversión: El humor y la diversión no sólo son sumamente efectivos instigadores de cooperación y grandes reductores de tensión, su uso también fomenta un afianzamiento entre los padres y el niño. Bañeras que llaman al niño a meterse dentro, un par de zapatillas que persiguen los dedos del pie de un niño alrededor de la cocina rogando ser usadas, o padres que corren una carrera con sus niños escaleras arriba para cambiarse a sus ropas de fútbol antes de un juego son todas agradables maneras de fomentar la cooperación. Seguro, es necesario un poco de ingenio y un poco de energía extra para crear maneras humorísticas para fomentar un comportamiento cooperador, pero es mucho más agradable que gastar tiempo en implacables pugnas de poder. El ser pedres no tiene que ser la tarea más difícil que los adultos encuentran a menos que ellos deciden hacerla tal.

Usando estas Estrategias

Ahora, repasemos las situaciones presentadas a principios del artículo. Las reglas de familia sobre cooperación para completar tareas producirían una definitiva mejora con la pequeña niña reacia a poner sus ropas en el canasto de la ropa sucia. La penitencia sería una mejor pena para la poco cooperadora niña que golpearla y enviarla a su pieza. Cuando estuviera lista para poner su ropa usada en el canasto de la ropa sucia, entonces podría salir. Hacer un juego de poner la ropa usada en la canasta de la ropa sucia, o una elección entre hacerlo ahora, o en 10 minutos, después que ella ha terminado de jugar, podría haber evitado una pugna de poder. Permitir un tiempo de transición y recordarle la necesidad de colaborar con las Reglas para la Familia también podría haber sido útil.

Con el niño que explora el enchufe eléctrico, una regla escrita estaría muy lejos de su comprensión, pero darle de golpes no es la respuesta. El niño pequeño pierde toda la asociación entre el peligro y el enchufe eléctrico, y en su lugar gana una vívida asociación de papi y de sufrir daño. En vez, decir "¡No! ¡Eso es una yaya que puede lastimarte, hijo!" y distraerlo con objetos más seguros, ayuda a los niños a asociar los enchufes con "Yayas". También indica la necesidad de los padres de limpiar la casa de objetos inseguros.

Finalmente, sostener un fósforo encendido debajo de los dedos de un niño para enseñarle el peligro del fuego engendra un inmenso miedo de papá, sin mencionar que quemar intencionalmente a un niño es verdadero abuso físico. A los niños se les puede enseñar legítimamente los peligros del fuego sin lastimarlos. Es crítico que los padres sean un modelo del uso seguro de los fósforos. Permitirle a los niños pequeños involucrarse en recoger hojas
secas o encender una fogata afuera les permite sentirse incluidos en una actividad segura que involucra el uso del fuego. Los niños mayores pueden encender las velas de la cena con mamá o papá supervisando la actividad. Teniendo claro las consecuencias y las reglas de la familia con respecto al uso de fósforos es crítico.
padres y sus niños pequeños). También provee instrucción y entrenamiento en masaje de infantes a padres y profesionales.

Reglas Familiares

El primer paso en establecer reglas para la familia es reunir a todos alrededor de la mesa de cocina con una hoja grande de papel y un marcador. Escriba Reglas para la Familia (su nombre de familia).

Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D. es el autor principal de "Nurturing Parenting Programs", y es Director ejecutivo del "Family Nurturing Center of North Carolina" ("Programas para padres sustentadores", y Director ejecutivo del Centro Sustentador de la Familia de Carolina del Norte), y es reconocido internacionalmente por sus investigaciones y trabajo en promover prácticas de paternidad y maternidad sustentadoras en las familias.

Juliana Dellinger-Bavolek, M.S.E. tiene extensa experiencia en la educación de padres y niñez temprana y es coautora del "Nurturing Program for Parents and Their Young Children" (Programa sustentador para mitad, haciendo una línea en el centro. En un lado escriba "Cosas permitidas" y en el otro "Cosas no permitidas". Por cada comportamiento "no permitido" debe haber un comportamiento "permitido". Esto no solamente le dice al niño lo que él o ella no debe hacer, sino que también lo que él o ella deberían hacer.

Suponga que uno de los problemas en la familia tiene que ver con compartir. La meta está que el niño contribuya a desarrollar esa regla. Hágale a su niño preguntas dirigidas, tal como "Isabel, ¿que regla deberíamos tener sobre compartir nuestros juguetes?" Y luego espere que Isabel responda. Si ella afirma que, "Los juguetes deberían compartirse," haga algo grande de ello, particularmente si ella es una de las que más necesita la regla. Si ella no sale con una regla, incítela, "¿Tú crees que nosotros deberíamos compartir nuestras cosas o guardarlas sólo para nosotros, como cuando tú querías la crema para las manos de mamá? ¿Debería yo compartirla contigo o decir, '¡No! ¡Tú no puedes tenerla! ¡Es mía!' ¿Qué piensas tú?" También podría querer discutir que no todas las cosas tienen que ser compartidas, como un perfume caro, ropas y juguetes favoritos. Teniendo algunas cosas que no están en la "la lista de compartir" puede proveer a los niños un sentido de comodidad y confianza.

A medida que los miembros de la familia comienzan a seguir ciertas reglas coherentemente, recompence

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a todos con una fiesta para celebrar que ya no es necesario anotar una regla. Es una gran manera de demostrar éxito.

El Castigo Corporal

¿Funcionan el Castigo Corporal?

¿Hay algún efecto dañino? Estas preguntas no tienen respuesta exacta. Hasta los profesionales disienten sobre el valor de los azotes.

¿Qué sucede cuando usted da de azotes a un niño? Un azote puede resultar en buen comportamiento de la misma manera que un dulce puede comprar paz y quietud en el supermercado. Usar el caramelo para aquietar un berrinche es una solución temporal. También lo es el castigo corporal.

Un niño que es azotado generalmente se calmará y se comportará bien. Pero, después de un rato, el niño empieza a actuar nuevamente. El padre lo zurra nuevamente porque los azotes parecen haber funcionado la primera vez. El niño nuevamente se porta bien por un rato y luego se porta mal otra vez. El padre lo casca nuevamente, y así sigue.

Este patrón ocurre porque el castigo corporal provee un control externo del niño. No fomenta a los niños a hacer decisiones responsables. No promociona la toma de decisiones interna.

Muchos niños creen que una vez que los han cascado todo está bien. "Estamos iguales", parecen decir. Los azotes hacen que muchos niños se enfoquen en el castigo más bien que en su pobre elección de comportamiento.

Los azotes tienen efectos secundarios. Avergüenzan. La vergüenza hace que los niños se enojen o piensen en represalias. Muchos niños que son castigados corporalmente tienen poca auto-estima. Algunos niños se retraen. Otros se ponen excitables, hiperactivos y agresivos. Los azotes raramente le enseña a los niños a pensar en como podrían haber hecho una mejor decisión.

Tres Maneras en que los Padres Usan los Azotes.

Hay tres maneras que los padres usan los azotes para castigar a sus niños: el enfoque impulsivo; el enfoque enojado; y, el enfoque planificado.

El Enfoque Impulsivo:

El enfoque impulsivo es usado más comunmente con niños más pequeños. Estos padres nunca son demasiado serios con respecto al golpe mismo. Es casi automático o reflexivo. El niño grita y luego sigue sus juegos.

El enfoque impulsivo no tiene ningún efecto duradero sobre el mal comportamiento de un niño. Después de recibir palmadas en el trasero varias docenas de veces, la paliza pierde todo sentido.

Demasiado frecuentemente, los azotes dependen de como el padre se siente en un momento dado. Si hoy está de mal genio, sus niños recibirán palizas por cualquier cosa que hagan. Si se siente más tolerante, sus niños se saldrán con la suya. Esta inconsecuencia confunde a los niños.

Los niños que son cascados impulsiva y frecuentemente creen que los golpes son una parte normal de la vida. Por lo que cuando otro niño hace algo que no les gusta, ellos recurren a los golpes también. Esto llega a ser un problema con los hermanos, en la escuela y con sus compañeros de juego.

Los niños que reciben palizas frecuentemente creen que todo lo que hacen está mal. Esto crea una pobre auto-estima y una carencia de auto-confianza.

El enfoque impulsivo no es un castigo efectivo porque no minimiza la necesidad de azotes futuros. Por el contrario, perpetúa la necesidad de más azotes. Los azotes frecuentes modelan un comportamiento negativo. Son reactivos. Los padres que usan el apronte impulsivo raramente usan remedios positivos para cambiar el mal comportamiento.

El Enfoque Enojado:

La segunda manera que los padres usan los azotes es el enfoque enojado. Aunque este enfoque es el más común, también es el más nocivo. Cuando usted se enoja y le casca a su niño, resultan un número de problemas. Usted enseña a su niño como "apretar su botón". Esto le enseña a su niño que su mal comportamiento tiene poder sobre usted y su auto-control.

Cuando usted castiga corporalmente impulsado por el enojo, usted crea intensas emociones negativas. Usted crea estas emociones en usted mismo, su niño y el resto de la familia. Muchos niños comienzan a temer a sus padres.

Dar de azotes enojado enseña a los niños a golpear también cuando ellos están enojados. Enseña a los niños que ellos no tienen que ejercer auto-control, porque usted no muestra auto-control. Dar de azotes enojado no enseña a los niños como hacer mejores decisiones.

Cuando usted da de azotes con enfado, frecuentemente es vengativo. Deja que su frustración se acumule hasta que estalla. Y entonces toma represalias, a veces humillando y avergonzando a su niño. Cuando usted disciplina corporalmente con enfado, podría dejarse llevar y hasta podría lastimar a su niño.

El Enfoque Planificado:

La tercera manera que algunos padres usan el castigo corporal es el enfoque planificado. Esto significa que usted le dice a su niño que ciertos malos comportamientos resultarán en una paliza. Sin embargo, considere estos factores antes de usar el enfoque planificado.

No hay evidencia que muestre que los azotes planificados le enseña a los niños a ser más responsables. Los azotes planificados también modelan un comportamiento negativo. Si usted se permite a sí mismo dar azotes, puede enojarse mientras los da. Puede usar los azotes en forma inconsistente debido a su estado de ánimo o porque se siente culpable. La inconsistencia empeora el problema. Muchos padres olvidan que un plan debe incluir soluciones positivas. Planifican usar los azotes como un castigo, pero no planifican estrategias positivas. Se olvidan que el plan debe enfatizar lo positivo y no lo negativo.

En resumen

Usted puede criar niños auto-disciplinados sin recurrir a los azotes. Los azotes pueden ser buenos para liberar su enojo o frustración. Sin embargo, es una solución temporaria que no enseña responsabilidad. La meta, como padres, es enseñar a sus niños como hacer mejores decisiones de comportamiento y como tomar responsabilidad de sus acciones.

Esta información sobre el castigo corporal fue sacado del nuevo libro del Dr. Sal Severe "Como comportarse para que sus niños también se comporten" – un ganador del premio de la "Parents' Choice Foundation" (Fundación Elección de los Padres) y selección popular del Libro del Mes. Para más información sobre el libro del Dr. Severe o talleres de trabajo llamar al 1-800-866-5208. Para una suscripción gratis de un año al boletín del Dr. Severe, "Parenting Today" (La Paternidad Hoy), escribir a "Greentree Publishing; P.O. Box 27672; Tempe, AZ 85285-7672" o visitar la página en la Internet en

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TOUCH

How Parents Can Have the "Magic" Touch

Do you recall the rush of wind on your face as you pumped up and down on a swing? Or the warm comfort of a parent's lap? Perhaps you recall the nubby texture of your favorite stuffed animal or blanket. What are your earliest touch memories?

The traces of early memories of touch can leave us, as adults, feeling secure, anxious, or traumatized. We now know that being physically held and comforted is as essential for an infant as getting nourishment from the bottle or breast. Babies in foundling homes in the 1930s actually died from lack of human contact.

Later experiments conducted with infant monkeys showed these babies would cling to a soft terry cloth "mother" even if she provided no milk rather than a wire "mother" with a bottle available on her chest.

More recently, premature infants who have been massaged gained more weight and gained it faster than babies who didn't receive this form of touch. Why? Massage increases the circulation of blood and lymph. Better blood circulation ensures more oxygen and nutrients reach baby's body tissues.

Lymph is a clear liquid which also flows throughout the body and then back to the lymph nodes, an important part of the immune system. Massaging baby helps circulate the lymph and tune-up her immune system. Massage also seems to soothe baby and reduce the level of the stress hormone cortisol.

The First Few Months

Our babies need to cling and touch, to explore with their hands and mouths, to become familiar with shapes, textures, weights, and temperatures.

Occasionally a baby is over-reactive to many forms of stimulation, including touch. This can be very frustrating to a parent, who may become exhausted as baby wakes and cries at the slightest stimulation, including your touch. Parents often find themselves walking on eggshells in order not to upset their baby. The only solution is to wait out the problem; some babies outgrow it in the first few months of life, for others it is an enduring part of their temperament. It is important not to take this personally; your baby is not protesting *your* touch, but many forms of touch and stimulation. As a toddler your child may continue to be sensitive, but she can begin to tell you what to avoid rather than just crying. In the meantime, keep the stimulation level (television, noise, visitors) low so that you can all relax a little.

How comfortable are you when holding your new baby? Touch is our earliest form of communication. Before your baby can understand your voice or recognize your mood in your face, she can feel your ease or tension in the way you hold her or in your touch as you pick her up.

Sometimes there is a not-so-optimal fit between

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baby's temperament and parent's personality. An active, squirmy baby may frustrate a slower-paced mother who expected many moments of gazing into each other's eyes while nursing. Likewise, an easy, sleeper type of baby may leave a more active or interactive mother feeling bereft of a close, mutual relationship. This situation may get in the way of a parent's best intentions to spend time holding the baby. If you experience your touch-relationship with your baby as needing some help, consider taking an infant massage class. Aside from the physical benefits, most of us simply enjoy rubbing a baby's back or stroking that soft downy head. Even if you have a "sleeper," you will both benefit from the connection that massage provides. If you have a "squirmer," massage may help calm her down long enough to look into each other's eyes for a minute or two.

Infant Massage Class?

To find a class, call a licensed massage school or State Licensing Board for Massage Therapy. Licensed massage therapists have upwards of 1,000 hours of training and education in most states. Becoming a teacher of infant massage requires specialized training and certification in some states.

A less-than-optimal fit between you and your baby may require some adjustments. You may need to mourn the loss of a holding relationship you had imagined during your pregnancy, and before. However, your baby may also help you develop in ways you never planned. You may learn to slow down to enjoy things a bit more, or to quicken your pace and enjoy that too.

Beginning to Explore

In the early, mobile months (6-18 months), your baby will touch everything indiscriminately. It is better to encourage this intense exploration by child-proofing your home than to repeatedly say "No!" to her as she reaches for unsafe objects. When you are out in public, use distraction if baby is reaching for something that is not safe.

During this age, baby will also be reaching and clinging to you. Remember that these are ways to find security and, at this age, they are universal and even a sign of emotional health.

If you are a parent who works outside the home, you may feel guilty if you need to pry your child's fingers off your leg as you leave the house. But, the important question is, does baby find security after you leave? Is your caretaker indulgent of baby's need to cling at times? Does she encourage a bond through holding and playing together?

This need to touch and to hold soft objects also explains your toddler's need to cling to that old, nubby blanket or stuffed animal. The touch memories of home and its comforts are almost woven into the feel of the security object.

Toddler Time

In the toddler stage water play, sand play, and especially mud play literally tickle your baby's skin and expand his tactile sense even further, opening up infinite possibilities of shapes and textures.

You may also enjoy a baby swim class together, where baby can feel the delightful stimulation of water surrounding her skin, and the wonderful weightless feeling that the buoyancy of water brings.

Some good toddler books teach about texture and are fun ways to familiarize your child with many textures and texture words. Be prepared to read them over and over again.

When it's cold outside, bring out the play dough for experiments with shape and texture. Provide your toddler with objects of differing shapes and textures, such as seashells and stones, to impress their texture on the dough.

Another touch-friendly mixture for older toddlers and preschoolers is a blend of cornstarch and water in a large shallow plastic container (See box). This has been used in a sand table in a preschool setting under supervision. Children love its slimy feel and parents love that it rinses off easily.

Your toddler may still want to sit in your lap or be held near bedtime. Indulge him and yourself in renewing this earliest bond, especially if you both have had an exhausting day of "NO!" The skin-to-skin contact can reassure both of you that deep, loving feelings are at the heart of your relationship.

Preschool and Beyond

In the preschool years, touch as part of peer games such as tag and Red Rover. Through these games children are

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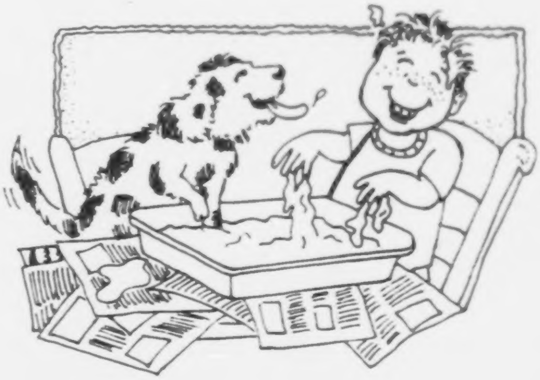
Cornstarch & Water Mixture

Be sure to use aprons and keep this near a sink for easy clean-ups.

Pour 1½ cups of water into a shallow rectangular container (6x10, or 9x13). Gradually mix in 2¾ cups cornstarch with a large serving fork. You may need to use your fingers to add in the last of the cornstarch as the mixture will be lumpy until it is thoroughly mixed. Experiment with adding even more cornstarch if you like a thicker consistency.



learning to tolerate, even enjoy, playful touch. These games are the forerunners of later team sports, and are a good way to introduce rules about touching others.

Through the experience of play, children come to learn the difference between comfortable and uncomfortable touch. Touch that is comfortable respects privacy. Uncomfortable touch is unwanted or does not respect privacy and the private body areas covered by swim wear. It is important that your child be told (more than once) that it is always okay to talk with you about any kind of touch.

Your attitude is very important. Your child is much more likely to discuss unpleasant touch experiences with you if she feels you hold her innocent for whatever may have occurred.

Use your child's play to teach her more about touch in relationships. Watch her body language for signs of discomfort, such as pulling away from others, and encourage her to discuss her feelings. Give her words to use if she has difficulty knowing what to say. Let her know that "I don't like that," is good enough. Acknowledge her ability to assert herself after she does.

On the other hand, your child may be overly aggressive in her use of touch with others. It is helpful to have across-the-board rules such as "We don't hit in our home," or "Hands are for helping." It is also important to give a voice to the aggression in the touch, such as "You look angry right now," or, "You want to hug Mark more than he wants to hug you."

Teach your child touch etiquette through your own interactions with her. When your touch has been too forceful or aggressive, apologize and invite her to talk about her feelings.

If your preschooler has had the unfortunate experience of traumatic touch, enlist the help of a therapist as soon as possible. Your child will not quickly forget this

➤ *Continued Pg. 4.*

Infants and Massage:

What the research shows

One very special form of touch is infant massage. Massage as a therapeutic intervention is hardly new. It disappeared from the American medical scene in the 1940s and is only now reappearing, although more as an alternative therapy than as a mainstream intervention. Largely due to the research of Tiffany Field, Ph.D. of the Touch Research Institute, University of Miami School of Medicine and her associates, we are learning more about what massage does and the way it works.

It may seem scary to start massaging infants (what if we become too rough and hurt them) but when done properly, it helps infants grow and develop. Massaging premature infants increased their weight gain and shortened their hospital stay. They gained almost 50% more weight and stayed six days less at the hospital. At the end of a year, these babies still showed the benefits of massage; not only did they weigh more, they were ahead in their development of motor skills and mental ability.

Normal, full-term infants given massage therapy cried less and showed signs of less stress than those who were simply rocked. They were also more sociable, and easier to soothe.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.

Babies Who Don't Cuddle

Although all babies need to be loved, not all babies want to be held. These "noncuddlers" are happier sitting in baby seats than tucked into their parents' arms. They like being in your lap, as long as you can resist the urge to cuddle them.

Parents often find this upsetting, thinking that perhaps their baby doesn't like them or is trying to avoid them. But that's really not the case. Researchers have found that infants differ in the amount and intensity of physical contact they enjoy. Although there are youngsters who love to be held and will melt into your arms, there are also infants who seem to hate cuddling. They cry, avoid, and resist being held.

What can you do if you have a baby who doesn't like to be held? Remember that your baby doesn't hate all contact, she just doesn't like to have her movements restricted. She may like to be stroked, and to play tickle games. She may begin to giggle when you walk your fingers up her leg and tickle her tummy. She may enjoy being bounced around on your lap while you hold her hands for balance, or with your arms forming a protective railing so she doesn't bounce right off your knees. She may gurgle with pleasure as she is gently rocked in her baby seat while you smile and make silly noises at each other.

If you have a noncuddler, remember that baby still needs you, your love, and especially the sensitive care which recognizes and respects her temperament. And noncuddling babies can grow up to be loving and affectionate youngsters.

experience, although he may not talk about it.

You may wonder what help a therapist can provide that you as a caring parent cannot. As a parent, you would likely have a very strong reaction to your child's experience. This may interfere with his exploring what the experience meant to him. It is easier for the therapist to accept the complexity of the situation, all the while holding the child blameless. Healing from traumatic touching is essential for the development of healthy adult intimate relationships.

Touch is our first and most basic language. Patterns of touch and holding in early life guide our expectations of touch in our adult relationships. As we rock and embrace our child, we respond to the most basic of human needs, the need for relatedness to others.

Elizabeth Allured, Psy.D. has a doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She is a staff psychologist on the Early Childhood Team at North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center and maintains a private practice in Port Washington, New York. She practiced for 10 years as a licensed massage therapist.

Dear Reader

April is my idea of Spring. It may officially start in March, but it isn't until I can go outside and feel the warmth of the sun and the mild breeze on my face that I know Spring is here.

Much of our lives revolve around touch, even if we rarely think about it. Where would we be without the loving hugs of our family? The touch on our shoulder that let's us know friends care? The back and neck rub which makes us sigh with pleasure? This month Elizabeth Allured writes about touch and our children. She has a lot to say, and all of it important. It simply wouldn't fit in a four-page issue. What to do? Let it flow into six pages.

We're going to do this from now on. In addition to our official six-page newsletter (four times a year), any time we have more to say, we'll say it. And if it takes a couple more pages, then it does. We try to be flexible here at Parent & preschooler. We're parents, and parenting does encourage that trait.

We also have Dawn Barhyte's spring crafts, more great books for kids, and a special section on Earth Day and environmental activities with kids. There is also a box on babies who don't cuddle, which was a bit of a walk down memory lane for me. My son was a total noncuddler who grew to be a warm affectionate little boy who begged to play "torture the munchkin." As you can guess, it was a game which involved a lot of hugging, and giggling. But of course, he got to call the plays and that makes all the difference.

Neala Schwartzberg

KIDS CRAFTS

Children love a world of make-believe and crafts are a way to showcase their imagination. Even the youngest child, given the chance, can be inventive and transform something ordinary into something extraordinary.

Value the creative drive in your child and if she is inspired to invent her own creation, resist the impulse to "fix" her project. Instead, watch and enjoy those little fingers as they work with materials, and follow your child's lead. It can take you someplace special.

Texture Box

You will need: shoe box, swatches of fabric with different textures (e.g. silk, flannel, corduroy, terrycloth), household items with different textures (e.g. steel wool, sandpaper, sponges), nontoxic glue, scissors.

Cut a hole in the side of the shoe box large enough for your child's hand to fit through. Cut several pairs of fabric swatches and household material you have collected. Have your child glue one of each of the pairs on the lid of the box and put the match in the box. Close up the box. Now, have your child reach in and find the match by feeling the differences in texture. Encourage your child to identify the properties of each material and discuss the way it feels. Does it feel smooth? Rough? Soft? Bumpy? Scratchy?

Rain Abstract

You will need: large paper, watercolors, tempera paints, nontoxic marking pens.

This is a perfect activity for a rainy day! Start out by having your child paint and draw splashes of color on a large piece of paper. Then, lay the paper outdoors on a smooth surface. Find a spot near a window where your child can watch what happens. The rain will splatter on the color creating interesting patterns. Ask your child to imagine what the designs could be. Remember to retrieve the work before the rain washes away all the color.

Bark Rubbings

You will need: lightweight white paper, crayons, tape.

Go on a nature walk and look for trees with different barks. Encourage your child to feel the differences in textures and label how it feels; bumpy, rough, smooth. Then tape the paper on the tree trunk and have your child rub the crayon over the paper to discover the design of the bark. Make rubbings from different parts of one tree. Each design will be different and you can discuss these patterns with your child.

EARTH DAY

Each April millions of people around the world show their commitment to environmental protection by participating in Earth Day activities. Forty years ago, however, Earth Day was nothing more than an idea, germinating in the fertile mind of Gaylord Nelson, then governor of Wisconsin, and about to become a U.S. senator.

The seed almost took hold in 1963, when Nelson persuaded President Kennedy that he should embark on a nationwide tour to spell out the damage we were doing to our environment. But other major news stories preoccupied the press and politicians. The idea would lay dormant for the next six years. Then, Nelson was reading about student teach-ins. "It suddenly occurred to me," he recalls, "that we could have a nationwide teach-in on the environment."

In September, 1969, when Nelson formally proposed the idea it received wide coverage. "The outpouring of activity was spontaneous, unorganized, and overwhelming," Nelson says of that first Earth Day in 1970. Across the country people participated in activities that demonstrated their commitment to cleaning up the planet. During the 1970s Congress passed 28 major environmental bills, including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

In schools, Earth Day became, and remains, an institution. Even the business world has gotten involved.

As for Nelson himself, he went from Congress to The Wilderness Society where he's already working on the 30th anniversary of Earth Day in the year 2000.

Adapted with permission from "One Man Who Changed the World" by Bennett. H. Beach, writing in the Wilderness Society's magazine, ***Wilderness***

Making Friends With the Earth

As spring rolls around, it's a good time to talk to our children about nature and the world around them. Sharing our own love for this astonishing planet can be a gift children will treasure throughout their lives.

Nature Memories: Take your child out into your own yard or to a nearby park. Spread a blanket on the grass and sit with your child. Look and listen to the birds; watch for squirrels; and look at the flowers, trees, and shrubs around you. Lay back on the blanket and watch the sky. Find shapes in leaves, grasses, flowers, birds, and clouds. Help your child to find colors and look for textures. As you talk together, ask your child how he feels as he looks and observes the world around him. As he talks, use a small tape recorder to record this conversation. And save those tapes; reliving a happy, spring adventure, years later, can be lots of fun for everyone.

Becoming Aware Environmentally: As you walk through your neighborhood talk about things we can do to help keep the area clean and healthy. Let your child help decide which items should be separated for recycling. Talk to your child's nursery school to arrange for a possible visit to a recycling plant.

Endangered Animals: If you live close to a zoo, plan a family visit. Observe the animals and talk about how they might be endangered in the wild and what can be done to preserve their habitat. Take along drawing materials and encourage your child to make drawings of these animals. If you do not have a zoo near you, perhaps a trip to the nearest library might be a possibility. There you will find nature videos and picture books to borrow. Help your child learn about each animal and discuss the way animals and humans interact in the world.

Getting Involved: If there are any environmental groups in your area, contact them. Many of these groups provide activities throughout the year for children and families. A nature walk, a canoe trip, or a bird watching afternoon might stimulate an interest your child will have throughout her life. These groups also provide opportunities for families to become environmentally active in their communities; to improve and clean the areas, help animals which may have become endangered, or work to increase awareness of environmental concerns.

Remember that Earth Day comes in April so contact your local Department of Parks for information on local Earth Day events for your family. Happy Spring and enjoy this great big, wide, wonderful world!

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

For More Information:

- **Greenpeace USA, Inc.**; 1436 U Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009. Phone: 202/462-1177; 800/326-0959, (http://www.greenpeaceusa.org). *Information for adults and children as well as a consumer alert regarding vinyl in pacifiers and toys.*
- **National Audubon Society**; 950 Third Avenue, New York, New York, 10022. Phone: 212/979-3119. *"Educational Materials" brochure lists a wide range of resources for parents and young children.*
- **National Wildlife Federation**; 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna VA 22184. Phone: 703/790-4000, (http://www.nwf.org). *A wide variety of information for children and adults. "Your Big Backyard" is a subscription magazine for children ages 3 to 5.*
- **The Wilderness Society**; 900 Seventeenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006-2596. Phone: 202/833-2300; 800/THE-WILD, (http://www.wilderness.org or http://earthday.wilderness.org). *Information for adults and children on the environment and Earth Day.*
- **Kids for Saving Earth**; PO Box 421118, Minneapolis MN, 55442. Phone: 612/559-1234, (http://www.kidsforsavingearth.org). *Information for parents and teachers including a guide for teachers of children ages 3 to 6. The guide is also good for parents.*

Library Resources

"Touching" Books

📖 *Touch and Feel Books*; DK Publishing, Inc. New York, 1998; Boardbook, $6.95. This series of sturdy books includes *Touch and Feel Farm, Home, Clothes*, and *Wild Animals*. Pieces of fabric allow baby to "touch" the different textures around the house, the animals on the farm and more. Use the books as a starting point, then look for other objects baby can touch and feel.

📖 *Your Body Belongs to You* by Cornelia Spelman; illustrated by Teri Weidner; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1998; Hardcover. Written by a social worker, this is a gentle book letting children know that their bodies belong to them. Children have the right to decline any kind of touch they don't want. Parents will find it helpful to read the "Note to Parents" at the beginning of the book.

Riddles

📖 *My First Riddles*; pictures by Judith Hoffman Corwin; HarperFestival; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $9.95. Part of Harper Growing Tree reading program, this book is appropriate for children 3 and up. The book contains simple guessing game types of rhyming riddles with hints contained in the pictures.

📖 *Puppy Riddles* by Katy Hall and Lisa Eisenberg; pictures by Thor Wickstrom; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $13.99. Children will enjoy the funny riddles with lots of word play and clever pictures. What did the puppy do when she won first prize at the dog show? She took a bow-wow.

📖 *Sheepish Riddles* by Kathy Hall and Lisa Eisenberg; pictures by R. W. Alley; Puffin Books; New York, 1996; Softcover, $3.99. A book for older readers, but younger children will enjoy the pictures and the riddles. Where do sheep go to get a haircut? To the baa-baa shop!

Rhymes

📖 *Animal Crackers* by Jane Dyer; Little, Brown and Company; New York, 1998; Boardbook, $4.95. Old favorite nursery rhymes including Little Jack Horner, Pat-A-Cake and more.

📖 *Dreamtime*; A book of lullabies selected by Belinda Hollyer; illustrated by Robin Bell Corfield; Viking; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.99. New and old lullabies perfect for easing children to sleep. Soft and gentle.

📖 *The New Adventures of Mother Goose: Gentle rhymes for happy times* by Bruce Lansky; illustrated by Stephen Carpenter; Meadowbrook Press; New York, 1993; Hardcover, $15.00. Did you ever want to read your child Mother Goose rhymes but when you read them over, didn't quite think the content was appropriate anymore? Bruce Lansky must have felt the same way, so he created these gentle versions of old favorites and combined them with new rhymes for young children. For example, the new version of Rock-a-bye Baby has become: "Rock-a-bye, baby, on a tree top. When the wind blows, the cradle will rock; when the birds sing, the baby will smile, and fall asleep in a short while."

📖 *The Mother Goose Cookbook: rhymes and recipes for the very young* by Marianna Mayer; illustrated by Carol Schwartz; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1998; Spiralbound, $11.95. After you read these famous Mother Goose rhymes, you can make the accompanying recipe. When you read about going round the mulberry bush, you can make mulberry (or any berry) jam. Humorous illustrations and simple recipes.

📖 *Old MacDonald* by Rosemary Wells; Scholastic Press, New York, 1998; Boardbook, $4.95. Sit down with your youngster, read aloud and make all the wonderful barnyard noises you remember from your own childhood.

📖 *Old MacDonald Had a Farm* illustrated by Carol Jones; Houghton Mifflin Company; New York, 1989; Softcover, $5.95. Another version of this old favorite; this time your child can guess which animal comes next in the song by peeking through a hole on the page.

The Environment

📖 *Hug A Tree* by Robert E. Rockwell, Elizabeth A. Sherwood, and Robert A. Williams; illustrations by Laurel J. Sweetman; Gryphon House; Beltsville, Md.; 1996; Softcover $9.95. Although a book for teachers rather than parents, both will appreciate the activities in this lovely book.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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El TACTO

Como los Padres Pueden Tener el Toque "Mágico"

¿Recuerda la fuerza del viento en la cara cuando subías y bajabas en un columpio? ¿O la cálida sensación de bienestar en la falda de un padre? Quizás recuerdas la textura de tu peluche favorito o de una frazada. ¿Cuales fueron tus recuerdos más tempranos del tacto?

Los rastros de memorias tempranas de contacto físico nos pueden dejar, como adultos, sintiéndonos seguros, angustiados, o traumatizados. Sabemos que ser tomados y reconfortados físicamente es tan esencial para un bebé como recibir alimento de un biberón o del pecho de una madre. En la década de los 30, algunos bebés en orfelinatos murieron por falta de contacto humano.

Experimentos subsiguientes que se llevaron a cabo con monos lactantes, demostraron que estos bebés se aferraban a una "madre" de tela de toalla a pesar que no daba leche, en vez de a una "madre" de alambre con un biberón en el pecho.

Recientemente, bebés prematuros que han recibido masajes han aumentado más de peso y lo han hecho más *rápidamente que bebés* que no han recibido esta forma de contacto. ¿Por qué? Los masajes aumentan la circulación de la sangre y del líquido linfático. Una mejor circulación de sangre asegura que más oxígeno y nutrientes lleguen a los tejidos del cuerpo de los bebés. La linfa es un líquido transparente que también fluye a través del cuerpo y vuelve a los nódulos linfáticos, que son una parte importante del sistema inmunológico.

Darle masajes a un bebé ayuda a circular el líquido linfático y mejora el sistema inmunológico. Los masajes también parecen calmar al bebé y disminuir el nivel de cortisol, la hormona del estrés.

Los Primeros Meses

Nuestros bebés necesitan agarrarse y tocar, explorar con sus manos y bocas, para familiarizarse con las formas, texturas, pesos y temperaturas. Ocasionalmente, un bebé sobre-reacciona a distintas formas de estímulo, incluyendo el tacto. Esto puede ser muy frustrante para un padre, que puede cansarse cuando el bebé despierta y llora con el más mínimo estímulo, incluyendo su contacto físico. Los padres frecuentemente se encuentran en la situación de tener que "caminar sobre huevos" para no molestar al bebé. La única solución es esperar: algunos bebés superan el problema durante los primeros meses de vida pero para otros es una parte permanente de su temperamento. Es importante no tomar esto muy seriamente; su bebé no está protestando sus caricias, sino muchas formas de contacto físicos y estimulación.

Como niño pequeño, su hijo puede continuar siendo sensible, pero Ud. puede empezar a decirle lo que puede evitar en vez de simplemente llorar. Mientras tanto, mantenga los niveles de estimulación (televisión, ruido, visitas) bajos para que todos puedan relajarse un poco.

¿Se siente cómodo cuando tiene al bebé en los brazos? El tacto es nuestra primera forma de comunicación. Antes de que el bebé entienda su voz o reconozca su estado de animo en su cara, ella puede sentir su comodidad o tensión por la manera que Ud. la abraza o la toca cuando la toma en brazos.

A veces no hay una afinidad óptima entre el temperamento del bebé y la personalidad de los padres. Un bebe activo o intranquilo puede frustrar a una madre de temperamento más reposado que esperaba muchos momentos de miradas a los ojos mientras daba pecho. Asimismo, un bebé fácil o dormilón, puede dejar a una madre activa o interactiva sin una relación cálida y recíproca.

Este tipo de situación puede obstaculizar las intenciones del padre de pasar tiempo con el bebé en los brazos. Si Ud. cree que su relación con su bebé necesita ayuda, considere en tomar una clase de masajes para bebés. Fuera de los beneficios físicos, la mayoría de las personas simplemente gozan sobando la espalda de un bebé o acariciando la cabellera suave. Incluso si Ud. tiene una "dormilón", ambos se beneficiaran del vínculo que brinda un masaje. Si Ud.tiene un bebé "inquieto", un masaje puede ayudar a calmarla lo suficiente para que se puedan mirar a los ojos por un par de minutos.

Una afinidad menos que óptima entre Ud. y su bebé puede requerir algunos ajustes. Quizás sea necesario lamentar la perdida de la relación física que Ud. se había imaginado durante el embarazo o incluso antes. Sin embargo, su bebé puede ayudarla a desarrollarse de maneras que Ud. nunca se había imaginado.

Quizás aprenda a ser más tranquila y a gozar más las cosas, o a aumentar su ritmo y también apreciarlo.

Empezar a Explorar

En los primeros meses móviles (6 18 meses), su bebé tocará todo sin discriminación. Es preferible alentar esta exploración intensa, asegurándose que su casa sea segura para los niños en vez de estar diciendo ¡"no"! constantemente cuando ella intenta agarrar cosas peligrosas. Cuando esté en público, use distracciones cuando el bebé intente tomar algo peligroso.

Durante esta edad el bebé

también va a estar intentando tocarla y aferrándose a Ud. Recuerde que estas son maneras de buscar seguridad y, a esta edad, son universales e incluso un signo de salud emocional.

Si Ud. es un padre que trabaja fuera de la casa quizás se sienta culpable si tiene que desprender los brazos de su niño de sus piernas cuando sale de la casa.

Pero, lo importante es si su bebé encuentra seguridad después que Ud. se va.

¿Su niñera es indulgente a las necesidades de su bebé a aferrarse? ¿Alienta un vínculo mediante juegos y contacto físico?

La necesidad de tocar y de agarrar objetos suaves también explica la necesidad de su niño a acurrucar esa frazada vieja y suave o un peluche. Las memorias del tacto en el hogar y el bienestar que brinda están casi entrelazadas con la sensación del objeto de seguridad.

Tiempo del Niño

En la etapa en que el niño comienza a caminar, jugar con agua, arena, y especialmente el juego con barro, literalmente le hacen cosquillas a la piel del niño y expande su sentido del tacto, abriendo las infinitas posibilidades de formas y texturas.

Quizás Ud. también puede gozar de una clase de natación para bebés juntos, donde el niño pueda sentir el delicioso estímulo del agua sobre su piel y la maravillosa sensación de no sentir peso que da el agua. Algunos libros buenos sobre niños enseñan sobre texturas y son una manera entretenida de familiarizar a su hijo con muchas texturas y palabras sobre texturas. Esté preparada para leerlos repetidamente.

Cuando hace frío afuera, use plasticina (play dough) para hacer experimentos con formas y texturas. Dele a su niño objetos de distintas formas y texturas, como conchas de mar y piedras, para que estampen su textura en la plasticina.

Otra mezcla que es buena para el tacto para niños de más edad y preescolares es una mezcla de maicena (corn starch) y agua en una cubeta de plástico grande (Véase recuadro). Esto se usa en una mesa de arena en un contexto preescolar con supervisión. A los niños les encanta la sensación viscosa y a los padres les gusta que sea fácil de enjuagar.

Quizás su niño todavía quiere sentarse en su falda o que lo abracen cuando es hora de ir a la cama. Sea indulgente con él y con Ud. mismo y renueve este vínculo, especialmente si ambos han tenido un día agotador de muchos "no"! El contacto físico puede confirmarle a ambos que hay sentimientos profundos de amor que son la base de su relación.

Prsescolar y Mas Adelante

En los años preescolares, el tacto es útil en juegos como "el pillarse" y "Red Rover". En estos juegos los niños están aprendiendo a tolerar, e incluso a disfrutar de ser tocados. Estos juegos son los antecesores de juegos de equipo posteriores y son una buena manera de introducir reglas sobre como tocar al prójimo. A través de la experiencia de los juegos, los niños aprenden la diferencia entre los contactos agradables y desagradables.

Los contactos que son agradables respetan la privacía. El contacto desagradable es indeseado o no respeta la privacía y la zonas íntimas cubiertas por trajes de baño. Es importante que su niño sea informado (más de una vez) que siempre está bien conversar con Ud. sobre cualquier tipo de contacto físico.

Su actitud cuando discutan esto es muy importante. Su niño tiene muchas más posibilidades de discutir estas experiencias de contactos físicos desagradables con Ud. si ella siente que Ud. cree que es inocente de cualquier cosa que puede haber ocurrido.

Use las experiencias de su niño para enseñarle más cosas sobre contactos físicos en las relaciones con personas. Esté atenta al lenguaje corporal para detectar signos de incomodidad, como distanciarse de otros y alíentela a discutir sus sentimientos. Dele palabras que puede usar si ella tiene dificultades en saber que decir. Dígale que "No me gusta", es suficiente. Reconozca su capacidad de ser asertiva después que lo haga.

Por otro lado, su niña puede ser demasiado agresiva en su uso del contacto físico con otros. Es útil tener reglas generales tales como "No golpeamos en nuestra casa", o "Las manos son para ayudar". También es importante darle una voz a la agresión en el contacto; por ejemplo, "Te ves enojada ahora", o "Quieres abrazar a Mark más de lo que él te quiere abrazar".

Enséñele a su niño etiqueta sobre el contacto físico por medio de su propia experiencia con ella. Cuando su contacto físico ha sido demasiado fuerte o agresivo, pídale disculpas e invítela a conversar sobre sus sentimientos.

Si su preescolar ha tenido una experiencia nefasta de contacto físico traumático, acuda a un terapeuta lo antes posible. Su niño no va a olvidar esta experiencia rápidamente, a pesar de que no quiera hablar sobre la misma. Ud.se preguntará que ayuda le puede brindar un terapeuta que Ud. no le puede dar.

Como padre, Ud. seguramente tendrá una reacción muy fuerte a la experiencia de su hijo. Esto puede interferir con su exploración de qué le significó la experiencia. Es más fácil para el terapeuta aceptar la complejidad de la situación, mientras que al mismo tiempo mantiene al niño libre de culpa.

Recuperarse después de un contacto físico traumático es esencial para el desarrollo de relaciones intimas adultas sanas.

El tacto es nuestro primer y más básico lenguaje. Patrones de contacto y caricias al inicio de nuestras vidas guían nuestras expectativas sobre el contacto físico en nuestras relaciones como adulto. A medida que mecemos y abrazamos a nuestro bebé, respondemos a nuestras necesidades humanas más básicas: la necesidad de relacionarse con otros.

Elizabeth Allured, Psy.D. tiene un doctorado en Sicología Clínica. Es sicóloga de planta en el Equipo de Temprana Edad en North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center y tiene una Práctica privada en Port Washington, New York. Ha ejercido diez años como terapeuta de masajes licenciada.

¿Clase de Masaje Infantil?

Para encontrar una clase llame a una escuela de masajes que tenga licencia o al "State Licensing Board for Massage Therapy". Los terapeutas de masajes licenciados tienen más de 1.000 horas de capacitación y educación en la mayoria de los estados. Convertirse en profesor de masaje infantil requiere capacitación especializada y certificación en algunos estados.

Maicena (Cornstarch) y Mezcla de Agua

Asegúrese de usar delantal y tener esto cerca de un lavaplatos para limpiar fácilmente. Vierta 1 1/2 taza de agua en una cubeta rectangular de poca profundidad (6x10 o 9x10 pulgadas). Paulatinamente mezcle 2 3/4 tazas de maicena con un tenedor grande. Quizás necesite usar sus dedos para agregar el resto de la maicena ya que la mezcla que será grumosa hasta que esté completamente mezclada. Experimente usando incluso más maicena si la prefiere más espesa.

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MATH AND KIDS
Making Mathematics Meaningful

"Gabrielle, would you like to help put the candles on your birthday cake?" asked her mother as she finished spreading the icing. With a big smile, Gabrielle nodded. "Well, let's figure out how many candles we need. When you were one, we put just one candle on your cake." Gabrielle took the candles from her mother and placed one candle on the cake. "When I was two, I had two candles," she said as she placed a second candle on the cake. "That's right! Now you are three. You have added another year. How many candles do we need now?" "One more," answered Gabrielle. "I need three candles. One for each year."

Many of us grew up never really liking math. When people would ask why, we'd probably say, "I had to learn it differently each year," or "it was hard," or "it never made sense." Why? Because most of us learned math by rote memorization rather than by learning fundamental math concepts.

More than Rote

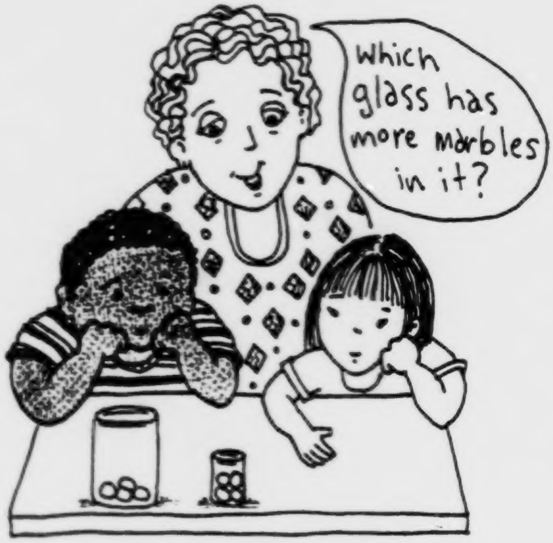
When children use memorization they seem to advance through the system flawlessly until they reach about third grade. Then, they suddenly hit a brick wall.

Memorization is important, it helps us get answers quickly, but we need to have a basic understanding of why the answer is correct. For example, children can memorize the equation 2 + 2 = 4, but to demonstrate conceptual understanding they must know that two apples when placed with two oranges make four pieces of fruit. Rote memorization in math is like learning to read by recognition of sight words. When people come to a word they don't recognize, they are lost. Without knowing how to sound out words phonetically, they can't move forward.

Often children learn to count by using their ability to remember what they heard. A child may be able to count to a hundred but have no idea what a hundred is conceptually. They just know that it is a very big number. This is why children, when asked about their parent's age, often provide an outrageous (at least to us) answer of 75. Kids know we're older than they are, but how much older is beyond their understanding.

Try this experiment. Give your child twenty marbles, a shallow bowl and a tall skinny glass. (If you don't have marbles, you can use any large tube pasta). Have your child count ten marbles into the bowl and ten marbles into the glass. Ask your child if both containers have the same number of marbles. If children have a conceptual understanding of numbers they will know that, although the glass appears to have more marbles, there are the same number of marbles in each container. After all, they counted the marbles themselves.

When children truly understand math, they know that a number remains the same no matter what the configuration of that number may be. For example, 4 is 4, whether it is expressed as 1 + 3, 2+2, or 4 + 0. It also means that they understand that 10 is twice the amount of 5; and 20 is twice the amount of 10. Conceptual


Which glass has more marbles in it?

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math evolves. It is not acquired by rote memorization.

Keys to learning

How do kids develop these concepts? They learn them in a developmental sequence in which one skill builds on the other. They need to learn these skills with materials they can touch, taste, and smell, as part of their daily activities.

✦ ***Appropriate Developmental Sequence***

Math builds on itself. Children take what they know about one concept and apply it to the next. When children freely explore materials they begin to learn about those materials: their attributes such as color, size, shape, texture, and weight.

The more children know about these attributes the greater their ability to sort and classify.

The ability to classify into categories is necessary before children can begin to create patterns.

This building up of understanding and abilities continues. "Old" concepts make new ones easier to understand. New concepts reinforce and extend old ideas. Creating a pattern of square, circle, square, circle is easier for a child who understands the differences between a circle and a square.

> ***Preschool children need to practice readiness skills over and over until they become second nature. Think Math!***

✦ ***Concrete Experiences***

Young children learn by doing, and they learn by trial and error. When they can control, manipulate, and arrange objects, they develop concepts and make sense of the world.

Many math concepts can begin with children's experiences with their own bodies. They can describe themselves as tall, short, brunette, blue-eyed, dark-skinned, and so forth. They can stand on the rug, behind the door, or inside the box.

They can classify themselves and others (e.g. boys and girls). They can make patterns with their bodies – open eyes, shut eyes, open eyes once again. They can count fingers and toes, and then match their fingers to their toes. All this is learned through touching, playing, and moving rather than verbal instruction.

✦ ***Meaningful Context***

Learning comes easiest and most naturally when children understand the need for that knowledge and when the material is interesting. Remember the birthday candle scenario at the beginning of this article? Think about the last time someone tried to explain something to you when you saw no reason to know it. How much did you learn? How much do you remember?

> ***Learning comes easiest and most naturally when children understand the need for that knowledge and when the material is interesting.***

When children learn math skills in a developmental sequence, using real life and concrete experiences, they develop an understanding of math that serves as a springboard to developing higher level math skills.

Activities to Do at Home

Children are uniquely individual in their development. Some will move more quickly through the concepts, others will move more slowly. The following schedule is only a guide.

Generally speaking, *two-year-olds* will be busy exploring materials and learning vocabulary related to position and direction. *Three-year-olds* will continue with those concepts but may also be ready to learn about classification. *Four-year-olds*, besides practicing previous concepts, are ready to learn about patterns, one-to-one matching and ordering. *Five-year-olds* are ready to learn to count and understand what these numbers really mean.

Two-Year-Olds

• **Free Exploration** encourages children to learn the characteristics, attributes, and properties of materials in the world around them. Before children can categorize objects, see them as similar or different, they need to have the concepts to describe objects, and the words to attach to those concepts.

○ Create junk boxes and keep them within easy reach. Collect buttons, jar lids, keys, corks, spools, ribbons, fasteners and so forth. Encourage children to explore the junk and to think of as many ways to describe each item as possible. Are the items big or little? Thick or thin? Hard or soft?

○ Place a variety of containers and utensils in the bathtub with your child. Use strainers, funnels, scoops, buckets, spoons, bowls, measuring cups and any interesting containers you can find. Discuss the characteristics and uses of each item.

○ Make playdough with your child (see recipe below). Experiment with rolling, squeezing, pounding and stretching. Try using cookie cutters. Mix two colors of playdough together.

○ Using a simple recipe, prepare a plain cake. Let your child help with pouring, measuring, and mixing. Discuss the properties of each ingredient (liquid, wet, dry, powder, etc).

Continued pg. 3.

- **Spatial Relationships** means that children learn to understand position and direction. They learn right and left, up and down, over and under.

○ Set up an obstacle course. As you move through the course, describe your movements. Encourage your child to do the same.

○ Make a sandwich with your child. Discuss top, middle and bottom. Talk about things that go between the slices of bread and on top of the bread.

○ Help your child construct buildings, bridges, and homes made with blocks. As you build, mention where you are placing blocks (on top of, next to, behind).

Three-Year-Olds

- **Classification** is the skill of sorting and grouping items. Children learn how objects are alike, and how they are different. These activities encourage children to see objects in different ways. Not only is this an important math skill, it's also a crucial one in creative thinking and problem solving.

○ Invite your child to sort the toys in the toy box. Help create categories like new/not new, plastic/not plastic, and soft/not soft. Notice the categories are open. Using categories like *not new*, *not plastic*, and *not soft* instead of old, metal and hard allows more items to be included.

○ Encourage children to sort through the items in the junk boxes and classify them.

○ Take a nature walk and collect leaves. Bring them home and group them by size, shape, color, type of edge, visibility of veins and so on.

○ Classify foods you eat during a meal. Which are sweet, salty, hard, soft, crunchy, smooth, cold or hot?

Four-Year-Olds

- **Patterns**, sequences which are repeated, are all around us. A pattern could be musical notes, the colors in a striped shirt, the shadows made on the floor by the blinds on the window. Math skills depend, in part, on a child's ability to recognize, copy, extend, and even create patterns.

ONE jillion tWElve ba-zillion sixty-hundred

○ Make a game of looking for patterns around the house. You'll be surprised. Even the vacuum cleaner creates a pattern as it goes back and forth across the carpet.

○ Help your child create sound patterns like *shhh cluck, shhh, cluck* and hand movement patterns like *clap, snap, clap, snap.*

○ Discuss the patterns of your routine with your child. Everyday we wake up, brush our teeth, eat breakfast and so forth. You might also want to talk about patterns in the days of the week and seasons of the year.

○ Invite your child to help prepare a dish in a pattern, like banana pudding. Use a clear bowl so your child can see the pattern created by layering cookies, pudding, bananas, cookies, pudding, bananas.

○ Create color patterns using crayons or colored paper. You can start with a two-color pattern and then extend it to a three-color, or even a four-color pattern repeated across a sheet of paper.

- **One to One Matching** involves pairing or matching objects in a one-to-one relationship. This ability allows children to determine the size of a set of objects and understand sets as *greater than*, *less than*, or *equivalent to* each other. For example, providing one slice of pizza for each child creates a one-to-one match between slices of pizza and children.

○ Encourage your child to match items that come in pairs like socks, mittens, earrings, and shoes. Move on to pairing items that go together, but aren't identical pairs, like a jar and lid, brush and comb, hand and glove, and ball and bat.

○ Invite your child to match items that come out even like the number of eggs into the sections of an egg carton, and toothbrushes to members of the family. Let your child set the table for dinner. Point out the equivalent match of one person for each place setting and one place setting for each person.

○ Allow your child to help you serve cookies, cake or any item where there will be more servings than people. Point out that there are more cookies than people.

○ Play board games with your child. Use rolling the dice and moving the game tokens to point out the one-to-one correspondence of spaces moved to the number on the dice.

- **Ordering** allows you to provide structure to a group of items by size, weight, length, etc.

○ Encourage your child to arrange objects from smallest to largest. Pots and pans and plastic containers work well.

Continued pg.4.

○ Talk to your child about your daily routine. Encourage your child to predict which activity comes next. What is the first thing you do each day? What is the last thing you do each day?

○ Invite your child to help you bake. As you follow the recipe, discuss the order in which ingredients are added.

Five-Year-Olds

• **Numeration (counting)** helps your youngster to understand the "manyness" of a number and to assign a verbal label to that number.

○ Encourage your child to count things like dinner plates and glasses.

○ Point out numerals in everyday life. Look at phone numbers, addresses, license plates and other things with numerals.

○ Look through family pictures. Show your child pictures from when he or she was one-, two-, three-, and four-years-old.

○ Sing familiar songs and recite rhymes that have numbers in them like "This Old Man" and "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe."

Preschool children need to practice readiness skills over and over until they become second nature. Your home provides a wealth of opportunities for learning and practicing. So, you're building a foundation for math every time you invite your child to set the table, match socks, help bake a cake, cut a pizza or a pie, or fold clothes. These experiences will serve your child well as she builds on this foundation. Think math! It is more a part of your day-to-day activities than you realize.

Pam Schiller, Ph.D., is an Early Childhood consultant and author. She has taught preschool children in both public and private school and is the immediate Past President of the Southern Early Childhood Association. She lives in Columbus, Ohio.

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I think they ought to subscribe to the Parent & Preschooler Newsletter

Homemade Playdough Recipe

1 pkg powdered, colored (flavored) sugar-free drink mix (such as Kool-Aid)
1 cup water
1 tablespoon baby oil
1 cup flour
1/2 cup salt
2 teaspoon cream of tartar

Mix powdered drink mix and water on stove at medium heat until steam rises. Add baby oil and stir. Mix together remaining dry ingredients. Gradually add to heated liquids and stir until a mashed potato consistency is achieved. Remove from stove. Place playdough on wax paper and knead until smooth. Allow to cool. Enjoy!

An Open Letter from a "Numbers" Person

Ever since I was a very small child math and numbers have been a big part of my life. My earliest memories are of counting along with The Count on Sesame Street. Bert and Ernie were great. The Cookie Monster was a trip. But nothing could get me laughing like the "One! One yellow daisy! Two! Two yellow daisies! Ha-Ha-Ha!" of The Count.

I remember helping my mom sort socks from the laundry and searching for the ones that matched. I remember my dad asking me where I wanted the mustard on my sandwich – on top of the sliced turkey or under it. I also remember helping my dad straighten his tools by putting the screw drivers in size order, from smallest to largest. I didn't know it then, but my parents were helping me become comfortable with numbers and counting. And, most of all, math.

I loved math because it allowed me to make sense of the world. It helped me learn to observe. Understanding math made me feel as if I "understood" things just a little more than I would have otherwise. It gave me a feeling of power over my environment. After all, when you can classify things, find places for different size objects, and be part of helping around the house, somehow you are connected to your world and feel you can master it.

As I grew older, math felt even better to me. I loved solving problems that were stumping others. I found that I had a talent for numbers – or maybe it wasn't a talent so much as an interest or even a love of numbers? In any case, math has always been part of me and my life. Math has opened doors to comprehension; helped me appreciate the process of math itself (the logical step-by-step process of solving a problem) and all of the processes of life where one thing builds upon another. Success at math makes me believe that there is nothing I can't understand and learn if I really try. So, whenever someone asks me "When will I ever use this?" My answer is always "When won't you use math?"

Sabrina J. Yazdpour

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Spring Delights From the Kitchen

Green shoots on the trees and shrubs; daffodils, tulips, and forsythia in bloom; the return of the geese and robins -- all sure signs of spring. It is a good time for the adults and preschoolers to do some "not-quite-cooking" together. Here are two recipes. First is the *I Want More Stuffed Tomato Salad*, which my little preschool friend, Sonia, and I used to prepare every time I baby sat for her. She'd eat the salad with such gusto and say "Na, I want more Stuffed Tomato Salad please". Na was short for Nair, my middle name, and her special name for me.

Then, we'd prepare the *Fruits on the Sticks*, and she loved them too. As we made these two recipes, we'd sing Brazilian and Italian songs, and I'd tell her Aesop's Fables. She has grown to be a lovely young woman, and a good friend who I see when I go back to visit Brazil.

I Want More Stuffed Tomato Salad-Eu Quero Mais Salasa De Tomato Recheado

6 tomatoes, ripe and firm
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 medium size cucumber, rinsed, peeled, and seeded
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 cup plain yoghurt
1 bunch watercress, rinsed, separated from the stalks
3 Tbsps. fresh lime juice
1/2 tsp. white pepper
1 Tbsp. fresh basil chopped
3 scallions, chop only white
3 Tbsps. olive oil

- *Child: Place two sheets of paper towel on a tray, set aside.*
- *Adult. Cut off the stem part of the tomatoes, a slice about 1/4 inch thick. Grate the peeled, and seeded cucumber, set aside. Reserve some watercress leaves to garnish, and chop the remaining leaves and the basil, scallions, and mint, and set aside.*
- *Child: Scoop out the seeds and some of the flesh from the tomatoes with a serrated grapefruit spoon, being careful not to damage the shell. Sprinkle just a little bit of salt in each tomato shell. Drain over paper towels for 30 minutes. Place the grated cucumber in a bowl. Mix the remaining salt with the cucumber and set aside. Squeeze the lime juice and set it aside.*
- *Adult: Drape a dampened double thick layer of cheesecloth over a sieve.*
- *Child: Pour the yoghurt into the cheesecloth. Set aside to drain the liquid. Combine the lime juice, white pepper, basil, scallions, mint, olive oil, and drained yoghurt. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.*

At Serving Time:

- *Adult and child: Using cheese cloth, squeeze out the liquid from the cucumber.*
- *Child: Combine the squeezed cucumber, chopped watercress, and yoghurt mixture.*
- *Adult and child: Taste yoghurt mixture for seasonings. Dry the inside of the tomatoes with paper towels. Arrange them on a serving tray.*
- *Child: Spoon the yoghurt mixture into the tomato shells. Garnish them with the remaining watercress leaves. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serves 6.*

Fruits on the Sticks-Frutas No Pauzinho

A refreshing dessert made with fresh fruits, it may be prepared with any desired fruit.

Juice of 1 lime
1/4 cup honey, (or maple syrup)
1/2 tsp. ground cardamon
1 cantaloupe, seeded
1 honeydew, seeded
1/2 lb. red grapes, rinsed
1/2 lb. white grapes, rinsed
Thin bamboo skewers

- *Adult: Combine lime juice, honey, (or maple syrup) and cardamon in a small pan. Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 mins. Remove the pan from the heat, and let cool. Show the child how to remove the seeds from the cantaloupe, and honeydew and how to use the melon baller to make the balls from both melons.*
- *Child: Separate both types grapes from their stems, and mix them in with melons.*
- *Child: Pour the cold syrup over the fruits. Mix them well with your hands (children love this part). Cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and refrigerate. These steps may be done up to 1 day before serving.*

At Serving Time:

- *Adult and child: Skewer the fruits on the bamboo sticks by alternating melonballs and grapes. Arrange the fruit sticks in a platter and pour the marinade over them. Serve cold as a dessert, or as a salad.*
- *Adults: Hug your children, thank and compliment them for a job well done.*

Happy Spring Everyone!

Sandy Allen

DEAR READER

I wish I could say that I was a "numbers" person. Alas, I can't. I am one of those people who counts on her fingers, and looks at the dinner check and says "Who wants to do the math?" Decades after, I still cringe at the thought of those algebra problems about the number of hours it would take two hoses to fill a pool if it takes hose A four hours and hose B 12 hours. I never learned the concept behind the math problems which flummoxed me throughout school. So, the steps to solve the problem never made any sense. I forgot them as soon as the teacher erased the board.

When it comes to learning math, there are some children who take to it like the proverbial duck to water. Then there are the others who need all the help and encouragement they can get. And, of course, a full range of children in between. This month's feature on math by Pam Schiller, Ph.D. tells us how children learn math and suggests lots of fun activities providing the crucial underlying concepts which makes math make sense. Does it work? Well, read *An Open Letter from a "Numbers" Person.* Sabrina might have loved math anyway, but it's pretty clear her parents provided the necessary groundwork for that love to blossom.

Want to meld cooking and math? Try the recipes in Preschooler in the Kitchen. Sandy Allen provides spring and summer yummies. And don't neglect the Library Resources. Math is all around. And in the best of all possible ways.

Neal Schwartzberg

Library Resources

Cooking and Math

🕮 ***Cook-A-Doodle-Doo*** by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel; illustrated by Janet Stevens; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1999; Hardcover, $17.

One day Rooster, tired of chicken feed, decides to make a strawberry shortcake. It isn't easy, with the other animals "helping," but finally the cake is done and everyone learns about baking. Special sections on the side of the pages provide extra information on ovens, measuring, even cooking hints. And the recipe, printed at the end, sounds both easy and delicious!

Activity Books for Parents & Teachers

🕮 ***Count on Math*** by Pam Schiller and Lynne Peterson; Gryphon House; Beltsville, MD, 1997; Softcover, $19.95.

For children three through seven, filled with activities organized by math concept: exploration of materials, spatial relationships, counting, fractions, measuring, and time and money. Although developed for teachers, this book is perfect for parents who want to combine math and fun.

🕮 ***MathArts*** by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Cindy Gainer, Gryphon House; Beltsville, MD, 1996; Softcover, $19.95.

More fun things to do, this time centering on art, organized by age and math concept. Includes such projects as crayon shape rubbings, painting patterns using crepe paper "brushes," carving stamps from wax, measure me string art, and making marshmallow sculptures.

Books for Kids

🕮 ***Busy Farm*** by Jo Lodge; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Hardcover with pull-out tabs, $9.99.

Bright colorful illustrations with text inviting the reader to find and count the inhabitants of the farm.

🕮 ***Cats Add Up!*** by Dianne Ochiltree; illustrated by Marcy Dunn-Ramsey; math activities by Marilyn Burns; Scholastic; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95.

Older children can practice addition and subtraction as one urban family seems to have cats coming and going. Homeless kittens and cats just seem to show up at their door, but they find homes for all of them. Except the one cat they had at the beginning of the story. Fun and clever.

🕮 ***Counting on the Woods***: a poem by George Ella Lyon; photographs by Ann W. Olson; DK Publishing; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.95.

Explore (and count) the wonders of nature through poetry and photography. From *One path, a stick for a staff* to *Ten trees whose innumerable leaves clean the air for everything that breathes.*

🕮 ***Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*** by Eileen Christelow; Clarion Books; New York, 1989; Boardbook, $5.95.

The old favorite story of five monkeys jumping on the bed, and falling out one at a time. With sweet illustrations this is a perfect book for reading with young children.

🕮 ***The Greatest Gymnast of All*** by Stuart J. Murphy; illustrated by Cynthia Jabar; HarperTrophy; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95.

One of the MathStart series, this book focuses on opposites. Zooming Zoe cartwheels on and off the mat, and more as she demonstrates opposites. A section "For Adults and Kids" at the end offers suggestions for math activities.

🕮 ***Millions of Snowflakes*** by Mary McKenna Siddals; illustrated by Elizabeth Sayles; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $13.00.

Told in rhyme, from one little snowflake falling on her nose, to five little snowflakes softly landing the little girl enjoys the snow. Playful and charming.

🕮 ***1, 2, 3 to the Zoo*** by Eric Carle; Paperstar Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $5.99.

A train is pulling the cages with the animals, from one elephant, to ten exotic birds. At the end, the cages are empty and the zoo is filled with animals and visitors.

🕮 ***Play and Learn Series including Numbers, Sizes, Shapes, and Colors***; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1998; Softcover $3.95.

The individual books in series feature lots of examples of each concept with bright photographs and visual interest.

🕮 ***So Many Circles, So Many Squares*** by Tana Hoban; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00.

Another in the series by Hoban, this one features color photos incorporating circles and squares, sometimes in usual places.

➔ Want more math books? Check out the Library Resources for October, 1998.

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NEWSLETTER

Pp Parent and preschooler

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Las Matemáticas y los Niños

Para que las Matemáticas Tengan Sentido

¿"Gabriela, te gustaría ayudarme a ponerle las velas a tu torta de cumpleaños"? preguntó su madre a medida que terminaba de esparcir la crema. Gabriela asintió con una gran sonrisa. "Bueno, veamos cuantas velas necesitamos. Cuando tú tenías solo un año te pusimos una vela en tu torta". Gabriela tomó las velas de las manos de su madre y puso una vela en la torta. "Cuando yo tuve dos años, tuve dos velas", dijo a medida que ponía una segunda vela en la torta. ¡"Exactamente! Ahora tienes tres. Has completado otro año. ¿Ahora cuantas velas necesitamos?" "Una más", contestó Gabriela. "Necesito tres velas. Una para cada año".

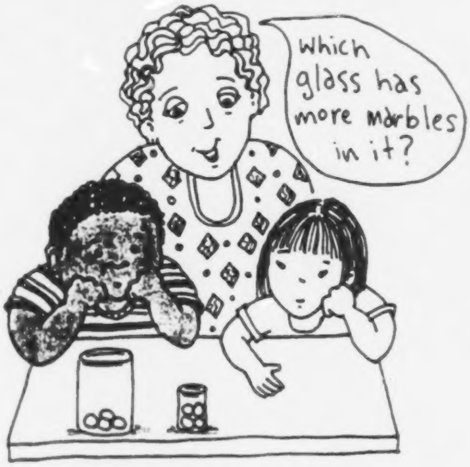
Muchos de nosotros nos criamos sin que realmente nos gustaran las matemáticas. Cuando las gente preguntaba por qué, seguramente decíamos, "Teníamos que aprenderla de una manera distinta todos los años", o "era difícil", o "nunca la entendí". ¿Por qué? Porque la mayoría de nosotros aprendimos matemáticas memorizando mecánicamente en vez de aprender los conceptos matemáticos fundamentales.

Mas que memorización mecánica

Cuando los niños usan la memorización parecen avanzar en el sistema sin ningún problema hasta que llegan al tercer grado. En ese momento, súbditamente se estrellan contra una muralla. La memorización es importante y nos ayuda a obtener respuestas rápidamente, pero debemos tener una comprensión básica de por qué la respuesta es la correcta. Por ejemplo, los niños pueden memorizar la ecuación de 2 + 2 = 4, pero para que demuestren una comprensión conceptual deben saber que cuando dos manzanas son puestas con dos naranjas equivalen a cuatro frutas. La memorización mecánica en las matemáticas es como aprender a leer reconociendo las palabras con la vista. Cuando la gente llega a una palabra que no pueden reconocer, se pierden. Sin saber como enunciar las palabras fonéticamente no pueden avanzar.

Frecuentemente los niños aprenden a contar usando su capacidad de recordar lo que escucharon. Un niño puede saber contar hasta cien pero no tienen idea de qué lo que es cien conceptualmente. Solo saben que es un número muy grande. Por eso cuando a los niños se les pregunta la edad de sus padres, frecuentemente dan la respuesta insólita (por lo menos para nosotros) de 75. Los niños saben que somos mayores que ellos, pero por cuanto es más allá de su comprensión.

Haga el siguiente experimente. Dele a su niño 20 canicas, un vasija de poca profundidad y un vaso alto y delgado. (Si no tiene canicas, se puede usar pasta grande en forma de tubos). Haga que su niño cuente diez canicas para el vasija y diez canicas para el vaso. Pregúntele a su niño si ambos contenedores tienen el mismo número de canicas. Si los niños tienen una comprensión conceptual de los números sabrán que a pesar de que el vaso parece tener más canicas hay el mismo número de canicas en cada recipiente.


Which glass has more marbles in it?

Después de todo, ellos mismos contaron las canicas.

Cuando los niños realmente entienden las matemáticas, saben que un número se mantiene igual no obstante cual puede ser la configuración de ese número. Por ejemplo, 4 es 4, aunque sea expresado como 1 + 3, 2 + 2, + 4 + 0. También significa que comprenden que 10 es el doble de 5, y 20 es el doble de 10. La matemática conceptual evoluciona. No se adquiere por medio de una memorización mecánica.

Las claves del aprendizaje

¿Cómo desarrollan los niños estos conceptos? Los aprenden en una secuencia de desarrollo en la cual un conocimiento descansa sobre otro. Tienen que aprender estas habilidades con materiales que puedan tocar, saborear y oler y que sean parte de sus actividades cotidianas.

Secuencia Apropiadas del Desarrollo

Las matemáticas se construyen sobre si mismas. Los niños toman lo que saben sobre un concepto y lo aplican al próximo. Cuando los niños exploran materiales libremente empiezan a aprender sobre esos materiales: sus atributos como color, tamaño, forma, textura y peso. Entre más saben sobre estos atributos tienen más habilidad de clasificar y ordenar. La capacidad de clasificar en categorías es necesaria antes que los niños puedan empezar a crear patrones o diseños.

Esta construcción de comprensión y habilidad continúa. Los conceptos "viejos" hacen que los nuevos sean más fáciles de comprender. Los nuevos conceptos refuerzan y expanden ideas viejas. La creación de un esquema de cuadrado, círculo, cuadrado, círculo, es más fácil para un niño que comprende las diferencias entre un círculo y un cuadrado.

Experiencias Concretas

Los niños chicos aprenden haciendo, y aprenden a través de pruebas y errores. Cuando pueden controlar, manipular y configurar objetos, desarrollan conceptos que descifran el mundo.

Muchos conceptos matemáticos pueden empezar con las experiencias de los niños con sus propios cuerpos. Pueden describirse a si mismos como altos, bajos, pelo castaño, ojos azules, de piel oscura, etc. Pueden pararse en la alfombra, detrás de la puerta, o dentro de una caja.
Se pueden clasificar a si mismo y a otros (ej. niños y niñas). Pueden crear patrones con sus cuerpos--abrir los ojos, cerrar los ojos, abrir los ojos una vez más. Pueden contarse los dedos de las manos y compararlos con los de los pies. Todo esto se aprende tocando, jugando, y moviéndose en vez de con instrucción verbal.

El Contexto es Importante

El aprendizaje es más fácil y más natural cuando los niños comprenden la necesidad de ese conocimiento y cuando el material es interesante. ¿Recuerdan las velas de cumpleaños al inicio de este artículo? Recuerde la última vez que alguien trató de explicarle algo cuando Ud. no le entendía por qué tenía que saberlo. ¿Cuanto aprendió? ¿Cuanto recordó? Cuando los niños aprenden destrezas matemáticas en una secuencia en desarrollo, usando experiencias concretas de la vida real, desarrollan una comprensión de las matemáticas que sirven como un salto para el desarrollo de destrezas matemáticas superiores.

Actividades que se Pueden Hacer en la Casa

Los niños son únicos en la individualidad de su desarrollo. Algunos avanzaran más rápidamente con los conceptos, otros irán más lentos. El siguiente programa es solamente una guía.

Generalmente, los niños de dos años van a estar ocupados explorando materiales y aprendiendo vocabulario relacionado a posición y dirección. Los de tres años continuaran con esos conceptos pero quizás estén listos para aprender clasificación. Los de cuatro, fuera de practicar los conceptos previos, están listos para aprender sobre patrones o diseños, comparación de uno a uno y a ordenar. Los de cinco están listos para aprender a contar y comprender que lo que realmente significan esos números.

Niños de Dos Años

La exploración libre alienta a los niños a aprender las características, atributos, y propiedades de los materiales del mundo que los rodea.
Antes que los niños puedan categorizar objetos, de poder verlos como similares o distintos, necesitan poseer los conceptos para describir los objetos, y palabras que le puedan dar a esos conceptos.

Designe cajas de cachivaches y manténgalas a mano. Coleccione botones, tapas de jarros, llaves, corchos, carretes de hilo, cintas, y cosas por el estilo. Aliente a los niños a explorar los cachivaches y a pensar de cuantas posibles maneras se pueden describir. ¿Los objetos son grandes o pequeños? ¿Gruesos o delgados? ¿Duros o blandos?

Ponga una variedad de envases y utensilios en la tina de baño con su niño. Use cedazos, embudos, cucharones, tarros, vasijas, tazas de medición y cualquier envase interesante que pueda encontrar. Discuta las características y los usos de cada uno.

Haga "playdough" (plasticina a base de harina) con su niño *(Véase la receta más adelante).* Experimente apretando, pegando, estrujando y estirándolo. Use moldes para galletas. Mezcle dos colores de "playdough" juntos. Usando una receta sencilla, prepare un pastel sencillo. Deje que su niño la ayude vertiendo, midiendo, y mezclando. Discuta las propiedades de cada ingrediente (líquido, húmedo, seco, polvo, etc.).

Las relaciones espaciales significan que los niños aprenden posición y dirección. Aprenden derecha, izquierda, arriba y abajo, bajo y sobre. Diseñe una campo de obstáculos. A medida que Ud. se mueve a través de los obstáculos, describa sus movimientos. Aliente a su niño a hacer la misma cosa.

Haga un sandwich con su niño. Describa superior, medio, e inferior. Hable sobre las cosas que van entre el pan y sobre el pan. Ayude a su hijo construir edificios, puentes, y casas hechos de bloques . A medida que construye, menciónele donde Ud. está poniendo los bloques (encima, al lado, detrás).

Niños de Tres Años

Clasificación es la habilidad de ordenar y agrupar cosas. Los niños aprenden como los objetos son parecidos y cómo son distintos. Estas actividades alientan a los niños a ver los objetos de distintas maneras. Esto no es solamente una destreza matemática importante sino que también es fundamental para pensar creativamente y resolver problemas.

Invite a su niño a clasificar los juguetes en la caja de juguetes. Ayude a crear categorías como nuevos/no nuevos, Plásticos/no plásticos, y blandos/no blandos. Fíjese que las categorías son abiertas. El uso de categorías como no nuevo, no plástico, y no blando en vez viejo, metal, y duro permite que se incluyan más cosas.

Aliente a los niños a ordenar las cosas en las cajas de cachivaches y a clasificarlas..Haga un paseo por el campo y coleccione hojas. Tráigalas a casa y agrúpelas por tamaño, forma, color, tipo de borde, visibilidad de las venas, etc.

Clasifique las cosas que come durante la cena. ¿Cuales son dulces, saladas, duras, crujientes, suaves, frías o calientes?

Niños de Cuatro Años

Estamos rodeados de formas y secuencias que se repiten. Una forma pueden ser notas musicales, los colores de una camisa a rayas, las sombras en el suelo de una persiana. La destrezas matemáticas dependen, en parte, de la habilidad del niño de reconocer, copiar, extender e incluso crear patrones o formas.

one jillion
twelve ba-zillion
sixty-hundred

Juegue a buscar formas en la casa. Se sorprenderá. Incluso la aspiradora crea una forma a medida que avanza y retrocede sobre la alfombra. Ayude a su niño a crear patrones o secuencias de sonido como shhh cluck, shhh, cluck y patrones de movimientos de la mano como clap, snap, clap, snap.

Discuta los ciclos de su vida cotidiana con su niño. Todos los días nos levantamos, nos lavamos los dientes, tomamos desayuno, etc. Quizás también puede mencionar estos ciclos en los días de la semana, las estaciones del año.

Invite a su niño a preparar un plato con una forma, como budín de bananos. Use una vasija transparente para que su niño pueda ver las formas creadas por las capas de galletas, el budín, los bananos, galletas, budín, bananos.

Cree tramas o patrones de color usando lápices de cera en papel de colores. Se puede empezar con una trama de dos colores y después extenderlos tres colores, e incluso una trama de cuatro colores repetidos en una hoja de papel.

Comparación de uno a uno significa aparear o cotejar objetos en una relación uno a uno. Esta habilidad le permite a los niños determinar el tamaño de un conjunto de objetos y comprender los conjuntos como más grande que, menos que, o equivalentes a si mismos. Por ejemplo, dándole una tajada de pizza a cada niño crea una comparación uno a uno entre tajadas de pizza y niños.

Aliente a su niño a equiparar objetos que vienen en pares como los calcetines, guantes, aretes y zapatos. Proceda a aparear objetos que van juntos pero que no son pares idénticos, como un envase y su tapa, una peineta y un escobilla, mano y guante, pelota y bate.

Invite a su niño a comparar objetos que salen en números pares como el número de huevos en una sección de la caja de huevos, el número de cepillos de dientes para cada miembros de la familia. Deje a su niño poner la mesa para la cena. Señálele la comparación equivalente de una persona por cada juego de cubiertos y un juego de cubiertos por cada persona.

Permítale a su niño ayudarla a servir galletas, torta, o cualquier cosa donde van a haber mas porciones que personas. Señálele que hay más galletas que personas.

Juegue juegos de mesa con su niño. Use tirar dados y mover las fichas del juego para señalarle la correlación de uno a uno de los espacios a mover con los números en los dados.

Ordenar le permite darle estructura a un grupo de objetos por tamaño, peso, largo, etc.

Aliente a su niño a ordenar objetos desde el más pequeño hasta el más grande. Las ollas y vasijas son buenas para esto.

Háblele a su niño sobre su vida cotidiana. Aliente a su niño a predecir que actividad viene después. ¿Qué es los primero que Ud. hace cada día? ¿Qué es lo último que hace?

Invite a su niño a ayudarla a hacer algo en el horno. A medida que Ud. sigue la receta, discuta el orden en que se agregan los ingredientes.

Niños de Cinco Años

La numeración (contar) le ayuda a su niño a comprender lo "mucho" de un número y de asignarle una etiqueta verbal a ese número.

Aliente a su niño a contar cosas como los platos y los vasos de la cena.

Señálele números en la vida cotidiana. Miren números de teléfono, placas de carro y otras cosas con números.

Examinen fotografías familiares. Muéstrele a su niño fotografías cuando ella o el tenían uno, dos, tres y cuatro años.

Cante canciones conocidas y recite rimas que tienen números como "This Old Man" y "One, Two, Buckle my Shoe".

Los niños preescolares necesitan aprender habilidades de preparación constantemente hasta que sean automáticas. Su casa da una serie de oportunidades para aprender y practicar. Por lo tanto, Ud. está construyendo una base para las matemáticas cada vez que invita a su hijo a poner la mesa, a comparar calcetines, ayudar a hacer un pastel, cortar una pizza, o doblar la ropa.

Estas experiencias les serán muy valiosa a su niño a medida que construye sobre esta base. ¡Piense siempre en las matemáticas! Es una parte más importante de su vida cotidiana de lo que Ud. cree.

Pam Schiller, Ph.D., es una consultora y escritora sobre Infancia. Ha sido profesora de niños preescolares en escuelas públicas y privadas y es ex Presidente de Southern Early Childhood Association. Reside en Columbus, Ohio.

Receta Casera para Playdough

1 paquete de mezcla en polvo para bebidas sin azúcar con color (como Kool-Aid)
1 taza de agua
1 taza de harina
1/2 taza de sal
2 cucharaditas de crema de tártaro

Mezcle la mezcla de bebida en polvo en la cocina a calor mediano hasta que salga vapor. Agregue aceite para bebés (baby oil) y revuelva. Mezcle los ingredientes restantes secos. Paulatinamente agréguelos al liquido caliente y revuelva hasta que se logre una consistencia de puré de papas. Sáquelo de la cocina. Ponga el playdough sobre papel encerado y amase hasta que quede suave. Espere que se enfríe. Que lo disfruten.

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CHILDREN AND DIVORCE

An Issue that Touches Everyone

Divorce may seem a common and accepted part of today's social culture, but when it occurs it is a time of crisis for parents as well as children. Parents usually find themselves caught between two distinct worlds: the world of adults (and their own needs as adults) and that of the needs of infants and children.

Children find separation and divorce a confusing and upsetting experience. They don't understand why their parents are unhappy, why they don't see one parent as often as they used to, or why they have to live in a different house or apartment. None of this makes any sense to them.

Parents need to be attentive to their children's behavior in order to help them with changes and transitions. Parents also need to provide ongoing reassurance and to allow their children's many questions as they attempt to take in and understand a difficult and confusing situation. Children need to feel loved, cared for, and above all, they need to see that their parents are there for them.

Infants and Babies

Parents often assume that infants and toddlers are too young to be aware of what is happening at home, and are untouched by the whole experience.

Babies, of course, don't know what divorce means but they are aware of their parents' daily routines, cues, and availability. An infant previously accustomed to the security of his mother's or father's soothing voice, a particular story told during eating, or perhaps a sweet lullaby sung daily before a nap, is "tuned in" and will notice a sudden change – if there is no song, familiar chatter, period of rocking in your arms. Baby definitely will sense a mother's withdrawal and less frequent nurturing or daddy no longer playing at bath time – smiling, making funny noises and splashing the bath water.

Babies younger than six or seven months of age do not have established boundaries. They do not yet realize that parent and baby are physically and mentally separate. Infants are simply unable to distinguish between themselves and their parents. They can not judge whether fear, sadness, anxiety, anger or withdrawal is related to how you are feeling about yourself or how you are feeling about them. Because they can't distinguish where you stop and they begin, they need consistency and stability. Cries of hunger which are met once with prompt feeding and gentle cuddling but the next time are met with a rough touch and impatience confuse and upset baby. Although it will be difficult in the midst of a divorce and its aftermath to provide loving consistency, children must feel unwavering trust in your ability to be a nurturing caretaker. This trust will allow them to develop a view of themselves as good, and the world around them as kind and supportive. They will also retain their

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innate sense of curiosity, which is essential to their cognitive and emotional development.

Due to the nature of divorce, a process often considered to be adversarial, parents might have to "sit with" difficult feelings rather than spontaneously acting on their emotions. For many parents the process of letting go of what once was a close spousal relationship and tightly knit family can come as quite a shock. While separation may be greeted initially with relief, this feeling usually doesn't last very long. There are too many complex emotional, financial, and practical issues to resolve.

As a result of all these pressures and problems parents often become angry and upset, and some parents begin to hold the baby responsible for the marital break-up. But even the most difficult baby can't really cause a divorce in an otherwise successful marriage. More often, these feelings are a reaction to your own anger at the entire situation. Regardless, do not allow your anger to be directed towards the baby. Your infant will only become irritable, confused and upset.

It's important that a baby feel safe and secure, and that the daily routine be a stable one. Try to keep the same feeding time, nap time, and play time. Remember, infants are too young to know what a divorce is, but they surely can sense your moods and pick-up on your emotional responses.

Toddlers and Preschoolers

While children may appear far too young to understand separation and divorce, they are not. They often have a better idea of what is going on than we would like to think. What they often lack is the ability to express their thoughts, feelings, and fears. It is essential that we do this part for them. What we say to them should be in the simplest of words, clear and direct. "Josh, daddy and I love you very much, you mean more to us than anything else, but we are not happy together. We have decided that we need to stop fighting and yelling at each other, and the only way we can do this is to live in two separate houses. Daddy (or mommy) will be moving to a new home. He will still see you and play with you, and call to talk with you when he is not visiting with you. We will both make sure that you will be well taken care of. You will still have plenty to eat, all your toys to play with, and grandma, grandpa and Aunt Susan will still spend time with you just like always."

Some children assume that the divorce is their fault and to compensate they may try to become perfect children hoping this behavior will bring their parents together again. Parents who, in the heat of anger and unhappiness, told their children that they were the cause ("We never used to fight until you were born") have to be particularly reassuring. You will need to remind your children that they are in no way responsible. Most children think that if they had just been better, said the right things at the right times, not spilled juice all over the living room rug etc., then dad and mom would not be fighting and planning to live apart.

Support Organizations

⇨ **National Fatherhood Initiative**; One Bank Street; Suite 160; Gaithersburg, MD 20878; 800 790-DADS; www.fatherhood.org

A national nonprofit organization working to increase awareness of the importance of fatherhood and strengthen the commitment of fathers to parenting. Publishes a quarterly newsletter *Fatherhood Today*.

⇨ **National Organization of Single Mothers, Inc.** P.O. Box 68; Midland, NC 28107-0068; (704) 888-KIDS

A nonprofit organization reaching out to single mothers. Publishes bi-monthly newsletter *Single Mother*.

⇨ **Parents Without Partners**; 401 North Michigan Avenue; Chicago, IL 60611; 800 637-7974

One of the oldest and most respected single-parenting organizations. Serves as a support group for parents as well as children. Call for local chapter information.

⇨ **Stepfamily Association of America, Inc.**; 650 "J" Street, Suite 205; Lincoln, NE 68508; 800 735-0329; www.stepfam.org

Provides information and support for stepfamilies and for individuals who wish to start chapters. The association acts as a central clearinghouse and referral agency. Publishes quarterly newsletter *Stepfamilies*.

⇨ **The Stepfamily Foundation**; 333 West End Avenue; New York, New York 10023; 212 877-3244; www.stepfamily.org

Offers books, referrals, phone counseling. Publishes quarterly newsletter *StepNews*.

Different children will have different reactions to your separation and divorce. Just as most children feel they are the cause of their parents' divorce, they will also feel a need for you to re-unite. After months of joint custody, Daniel, a preschooler finally confessed. "It is sort of fun to have my own room at Daddy's, but this game, going to Daddy's some of the time and staying at our home some of the time, really isn't fun any more. I don't want to play this game. I want Daddy to come and live in our house now."

Fantasies about mom and dad living in the same house again are not given up willingly, and may persist for many years. Children can maintain this hope well past pre-school years regardless of how many times you have told them it will never happen. It is appropriate for parents to hug their child close and say, "Honey, you are wonderful, daddy and I love you, we both have so much fun with you, but, even though you are our special little girl daddy and mommy can not live together. I know this makes you sad, but it is better for us to live separately. But, we will both always love you and take care of you."

Some children will take on the responsibility of running the house – caring for younger siblings, cooking, cleaning – both to help a parent who seems unable to cope, and to make things better in the hope that a parent will return. Other children may attempt to withdraw from the situation, having already been in the cross-fire, caught between fights of mother and father.

Some children regress. Some may grieve with a sense of loss. Children need to be allowed to share their reactions. Expressions of tears, sadness, anger, isolation, anxiety, denial and definitely confusion, are all normal. During this time it is helpful to encourage your child to talk about his feelings. Be patient as you listen. Don't deny his perceptions, instead try to repeat and reflect back what you are hearing, expressed so that your child feels you have understood. You can say: "It sounds like you are sad (worried, etc.)."

Daily Living

There are some basic rules that you might want to try to in order to reduce future battles and tension between you and your ex, as well as eliminate disappointments that your children might otherwise suffer.

✦ As children understand what it means to live primarily with either mommy or daddy, you will need to be supportive of whatever schedule has been determined for visitation. This will not only include a weekly schedule, but also one for holidays, vacations, and birthdays. It is helpful if both parents work these arrangements out without the children's involvement. This way children will never be "in the middle."

✦ Children should never be used as messengers. Any information that you want shared with your spouse (or ex-spouse) must come directly from you, your lawyer or mediator.

✦ Try not to quiz your children about your spouse's behavior when they return from a visit. Most children will tell you about their experience if you allow them to do this when they are ready. If you learn about something that worries you, gently try to clarify what they may be trying to explain. Remember that you can always go directly to the source (your spouse) if necessary.

✦ Children should not be asked to keep secrets, ever. Most children have trouble remembering to do this, especially the little ones. Asking them to keep something from their other parent may confuse or make them feel anxious. Asking them to keep a secret might also promote a sense of guilt if they become uncomfortable with what you are asking of them. But most important, a child should never feel that you are asking them to side against their other parent.

✦ Try not to project your feelings onto your children. Separate your concerns and needs from theirs. If you are having a hard time determining how your child is feeling or coping versus how you are feeling, sit down with paper and pencil and write out your thoughts. Writing is a tool that can give you an enormous advantage. Rather than overreacting you can examine your concerns immediately after you have written them, or put them away for a while and then take another look. Sometimes a couple of hours, or a day or two will help you to gain a clearer perspective.

✦ Understand that your goal is to create a safe emotional haven for your child. To do this, you must never dodge difficult questions with untruthful answers. The child who can ask about the separation and divorce is ready to hear an age-appropriate explanation. If at any time you do not feel ready to respond to your child about a specific issue, there is no need to feel forced to do so. It is acceptable to tell a child that you need more time to think about the important question that has been asked. Let her know that as soon as you are able you will share your thoughts with her and that both of you will talk together.

✦ It is essential not to blame, belittle or call your spouse inappropriate names in front of your child. Little ones need their other parent and will most likely be hurt by your disparaging remarks. Remember that your child loves you both.

✦ Play can be therapeutic. Children who have difficulty expressing their feelings often turn to their toys, i.e. soft blocks, bats or balls, to help them cope with their anger or upset. In a similar way, it is okay for them to become attached to playing with a baby doll, nurturing it in the actual manner that they think you should nurture them.

Both boys and girls will benefit from toys that allow anger, regression, acting as mommy and daddy, as well as from dolls and stuffed animals. For older children, you might want to offer hand puppets and old clothes so they can dress up to play mom, dad or grandparent roles. If you are lucky enough to be invited to play with them, quietly observe their behavior. Some of your questions or fears may even be clarified as you are watching.

✦ When it is time for your son or daughter to spend the holidays or perhaps part of the summer vacation with her other parent, it is important for your little one to have a great time. Let her know that you will be fine while she is away, and that you can both stay in touch by telephone. Holidays and vacations should be guilt-free for children. Their job is to have fun and not feel that they should be home taking care of you.

✦ At all times it is helpful to keep in mind that it is normal for you or your child to have adjustment problems, or difficulty around a particular issue. At such times it can be helpful to consult a professional. You can go to a local mental health center to request a referral, or to a private therapist. This is always worth considering as an alternative to becoming overwhelmed or depressed.

✦ Young children need to be reassured that they will not be abandoned either emotionally or physically. Although you will have thoughtfully explained why daddy and mommy cannot live together, and that your child is in no way to blame, you will need to repeat this many times so that the message will gradually become real. Just as adults may have a hard time letting go of their marriage, few children are able to accept their parents' divorce with ease. Like you, they will experience the impact of this change over time. And, just as many parents struggle through this process - testing their feelings, finding new routines that meet their needs, children go through a similar experience as well.

Children can flourish in a single-parent home. Divorce need not overshadow all of the positive aspects of a child's life, especially if both parents can resolve to try and keep the situation between them at a low conflict level. What seems to determine how well a child will function is whether he has a good solid relationship with both father and mother. One in which both parents can be depended on for love, nurturing, reassurance and respect for his needs.

Cynthia Wagner, CSW, is certified in Clinical Social Work and is a Board Certified Diplomate in Social Work. She currently runs the Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) for North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Ms. Wagner also maintains a private practice focusing on crisis intervention and medical issues with families and children.

Divorce
Ten Things I Learned After the Fact

For anyone who hasn't been divorced, trust me— divorce is never what you imagine it to be. Here are a few insights that may hopefully save you a trip to court— or at the very least, give you some idea of what may lie ahead. I know everything listed here might not apply to everybody (there's always going to be the exception to the rule) but it covers most of us. ***Vicki Lansky***

1. It Takes Longer To Get Your Divorce Behind You Than You Think, Or Can Allow Yourself To Believe.

I thought I had it together after a year. Then I thought I had it together after 3 years. Then I was impressed when I could say I had been divorced 5 years. Then I was devastated that I could be brought to tears in seconds after 8 years when something inappropriate, I thought, was said to me. I guess it's always "there" but fortunately with each passing year it feels longer ago, less important and more comfortable but unlike your child's "owies", it's never quite all gone. As that old saying goes, marriage may not be forever, but divorce is.

2. Going Through Divorce Is A Physical Experience.

This one took me by surprise. My body seemed to experience a death defying whirlpool. I hate speed, roller coasters and the feeling of one's stomach dropping when on a turbulent airplane ride. But I can remember having all those feelings— simultaneously— while just sitting in a chair after we separated. Yuck! Fortunately this usually passes in 3 to 9 months. Shorter than #1 but not short enough!

3. It Never Works Out According To Plan — Yours, That Is!

And even when it does, it's only for a short time. Life after divorce is always changing and you won't have a lot of control over those changes. We often get hopelessly caught up in parenting plans when we first separate, and— while that is important— it doesn't usually prepare you for the on-going changes and negotiations that go on for years— changes that you don't always like but learn to live with. There is the on going trade-off of which battles will catch your children in the middle and when one must learn to lose a battle to win the war— or should I say the peace— the peace of mind your children need. Life takes twists and turns that will never be in the "plan" so you must learn to go with the flow or be hopelessly mired in your own anger or disappointments.

4. Parental Time (aka custody) And Shared Financial Responsibility (aka child support) Are NOT Tied Together

Though they might be tied together in the eyes of your mother or your mother-in-law, these are two separate issues. When you confuse them or make them cause-and-effect items, you do a squeeze on your kids. It seems like such a natural ("if he doesn't pay support on time, well then the kids just won't be ready on time or at all" or "I'll be damned if I'm going to send a check this month if she and her honey are going on a ski trip: a) with the kids (that's not what I'm sending support for and I'll not see them this weekend like I was supposed to) or b) without the kids (she's away and I have all these extra food bills this week with the kids here) but this is not a life situation where each month comes to an EVEN tally. EVEN it never is. Equitable is the best you can hope for. Marriage isn't EVEN so divorce sure ain't gonna be.

5. You Never Outgrow Your Wish To Be The Favored Parent

Remember when your kids asked you who you loved best, you knew what a silly (but honest) question it was because everyone likes being first in the hearts of those they love. Unfortunately in a divorce, when parents aren't together to hear news in a shared situation, your child will tell one before the other. It doesn't mean you're the less favored, secondary or unfavorite parent but it sure does feels like it. So you have to learn to forgive yourself when those competitive feelings crop up from the dark depths of your soul and learn to laugh at them. Remember you're not alone.

6. Divorce Doesn't "Fix" Your Ex

If your former spouse was cheap, never on time and thoughtless before the divorce, he or she will continue to be tight, late and say stupid things in the divorce. The things that you tolerated in marriage under the perfume of love will infuriate you in divorce. You thought you were done with putting up with "(fill in the blank)" but it continues just like it was in your marriage. You have to learn to accept, overlook and forgive or else you are going to expend a lot of wasted emotions on someone you're not even married to. You can only be angry or hate someone you care about. (Ain't that a bummer!)

Also, your lawyer can't make your ex-spouse be a sensitive person or parent so don't waste unnecessary dollars trying to have your lawyer get "through" to him or her. When you can begin to replace the word "wrong" (as pertains to parenting skills, money values, personal habits, etc, etc, etc) with the word "different" you'll have come a long way towards acceptance.

7. Divorce, Unlike Marriage, Is FOREVER When There Are Kids

Unless you really wish to lose your position as a parent (which is THE hardest on kids), you will have family occasions, graduations, shared holidays, christenings, weddings and funerals that will continually bring you together over the years. Those knots in your stomach at shared public events — especially in the beginning — are known only to others who have been through divorce. No one else has a clue. Approaching your ex first with a friendly word at such events puts everyone else at ease and is a worthwhile practice. And with practice— and some history— you may find those stomach knots actually loosening. Mortal enemies have been known to actually become friends— sometimes good friends— and many find they can be kind of comfortable "cousins."

8. If You Don't Hate Your Exiting Spouse When You First Separate, You Will Within 3 Months to 3 Years

It's next to impossible to skip this one though it always seems to come as a surprise. Why, I'm not sure. Now you both have different agendas and no way will your priorities (usually money concerns or kid issues) be the same as your ex's. It's okay — and sometimes even important — to be angry with your ex (for a certain amount of time— not forever) but it's not okay to share or show that anger with your children or in front of your children. Not easy, but for their mental health, their need for a safe haven and their need to love both parents, you've got to keep these volatile feelings to yourself...or limit them to your therapist or support group.

9. The Day Your Ex Remarries Is REALLY PAINFUL.

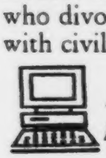
The only thing worst than hearing your ex is remarrying from a third party is actually hearing the news from your ex. Obviously a no-win situation. No matter how glad you are that your ex is your ex, you'd never take him/her back and you're thankful you're divorced, it's still a painful time. It's that last nail in the coffin of what was once your marriage— and your hopes and your dreams. If you know anyone whose ex is getting remarried, don't let them spend that day alone. And if you know your ex is getting remarried, don't spend it by yourself— unless you really enjoy digging a dark hole and crawling into it. (Obviously the kids will be attending the wedding and unsure of how to be of comfort to or deal with the other parent.)

10. After All This, Know That There Is Still Such a Thing As A GOOD DIVORCE

Yes, you read that line correctly. Now this is not to be confused with divorce is good, but there are ways of turning this lemon into lemonade.

Read up on how to do it. There are lots of books to help you — even I've written one. Making peace with life's changes is good for you, for your kids and for your life. Divorce is not the path to be recommended easily, but it's not a terminal illness or a contagious disease either.

I did not come up with the term "good divorce." I'll credit that to Constance Ahrons, author of the book, *The Good Divorce*. "A good divorce," she says, "is not an oxymoron. Astonishingly, in my studies, I found half the divorcing couples we interviewed had civilized, and many amicable, relations with each other. Another surprise was that almost everybody wished to be on better terms with his or her ex— even the ones who had bad relationships. I'm tired of the doomsday reports and the label of the 'broken home.' We have been so inundated with negative stories of divorce that men and women need to hear the message that they can make their families work better, minimize stress and not feel like total failures. In a good divorce, a family with children remains a family— one that is sufficiently cooperative to permit kinship bonds to continue. Perhaps if we begin to revise our expectations of what divorce means, all parents who divorce can do so with civility and respect."



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The Health Corner

Feeding Your Infant

During the first year of your baby's life, she will grow and develop at a rate faster than at any other time. Most newborns weigh between 6½ to 8 pounds. They double their birth weight by six months of age and triple it by their first birthday.

Before birth a baby is nourished through the mother's placenta. If the mother's diet is healthy, it provides the nutrients needed for her baby to grow. After baby is born, in order to fuel her growth, the food has to be well balanced in nutrients, easily digestible, and readily available.

There are two possibilities for feeding your baby; breast milk and formula.

Breast-feeding

Most experts agree that breastmilk is best for a baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast milk for the first year of life and states that "human milk is uniquely superior for infant feeding."

Breastfeeding offers many benefits and advantages to both baby and mother. Babies receive an immunological edge from mother's milk because it contains antibodies to many bacterial and viral illnesses. This helps protect the infant from becoming sick in the early years of life. Breastfed babies have fewer ear infections, allergies, and digestive problems.

The benefits to Moms include reduced incidence of breast and ovarian cancer as well as the emotional benefits of a special closeness to their infants. Breast feeding at the time of delivery will also reduces uterine bleeding and helps return the uterus back to its tone prior to pregnancy.

Breastfeeding is always available and costs virtually nothing. Mother's diet during breastfeeding should be well-balanced with lots of calcium and plenty of noncaffeinated fluids. There are no health disadvantages to breastfeeding, however mothers must make a serious commitment to nurse their babies every two to three hours in the first few weeks and be available to nurse as often as the baby wants thereafter.

There is no special equipment needed when breastfeeding. A comfortable chair, a plump pillow, footstool, and a glass of water, or juice is all you need when preparing to breastfeed. Remember to wash your hands before breastfeeding your baby as good hygiene is important. Position the baby close to you, tummy to tummy with her head facing the breast. This helps the infant to latch-on to your breast. Becoming properly attached is critical for a successful breastfeeding experience. As Mom gently strokes the infant's mouth with her nipple, encouraging the infant to widely open her mouth, baby is drawn close to the breast and her mouth compresses the structures that contain the breastmilk. While breastfeeding is a natural process, Mom and Baby must learn this skill in order for the infant to nurse effectively with minimal discomfort to Mom.

It is necessary for the baby to nurse 10-20 minutes on each breast 8-12 times a day in the first weeks to establish a milk supply that allows babies to grow. During the first few months, babies gain between 1/2 to 1 ounce a day.

Babies send out hunger cues or signals that tell Mom they are ready for a feeding. When baby awakens, she becomes very alert, looking around for Mom. She then becomes active, moving her arms and legs about, possibly brings her hands close to her mouth, and may even make sucking or lip smacking sounds. If Mom still hasn't gotten the message, she will then cry out. Crying is a very late signal, and babies should be put to the breast before this occurs so they can calmly latch-on. Mother are reassured that their babies are getting enough milk when they see that baby falls asleep after feeding, is happy when awake, and is gaining weight. Some mothers returning to work who want to continue breastfeeding and can do so by pumping and storing breast milk in either the refrigerator or freezer for Dad or baby-sitter to feed baby.

Health Corner Continued

Bottle feeding

Formula is an alternative method for feeding your baby. Commercially prepared formulas are based on either cow's milk or soy protein and contain a balance of nutrients that are as close to breast milk as possible. Your pediatrician will advise you on the type and amount of formula to feed your baby.

Babies fed either formula or breast milk do not require any additional water or fluids and should not be offered any. If they fill up on water or juice, they will not be getting the nutrition that breastmilk or formula provides for their incredible growth needs.

It is not usually necessary to sterilize bottles and nipples if you live in a municipal area with a protected water supply. Washing the bottles and nipples with hot soapy water and a bottle brush or using the dishwasher is often sufficient. However it is important to ask your baby's doctor for guidance and recommendations.

Formula comes in a variety of preparation forms. Ready-to-feed formula requires you to simply pour it into a bottle. Concentrated formula will direct you to dilute the formula with a measured amount of water, according to the label's directions. Powdered formula, the least expensive preparation, requires more time for mixing.

Important tips to remember before preparing formula are to wash your hands, wash the top of the can, check the expiration date, and clean the can opener and measuring equipment with hot soapy water.

It is a good idea to prepare formula in advance, and most parents prepare a 24-hour supply of formula stored in the refrigerator. However most infants prefer it either warm or at room temperature so you will have to warm the bottle up. Make sure the bottle isn't too warm before feeding baby.

When you are ready to feed your baby, it is important to be relaxed and comfortable. Position your baby in a semi upright position close to you either in your arms or on your lap. Gently stroke baby's lip with the nipple of the bottle. This will cause the infant to open her mouth. Place the nipple on top of the tongue and gently begin feeding the infant.

Make sure that formula has completely filled the nipple and neck of the bottle. This will eliminate air as the baby swallows. Burping your baby half way through the feeding is important to relieve your infant of air they may have swallowed. Most babies, whether breastfed or formula fed, spit up a little after feeding or while burping.

Use this time to create a warm bond with your infant by talking softly or singing.

Never prop a bottle in the baby's crib or allow the infant to feed unattended. Never let a baby go to sleep with a bottle filled with formula or juice. This can allow bacteria to grow and interfere with later tooth development. Additionally, remember to discard any unused portion of the infant's formula or breast milk left in the bottle after feeding.

Regardless of which method of feeding you chose, as your baby grows and develops, you can feel reassured that you have provided her with all the necessary ingredients for nourishment and be confident that the most important of these is your love, warmth and closeness.

Fran Brenner, MS, RN, NNP has been a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner for 23 years. She is a consultant and nurse educator teaching expectant parents Newborn Care and Infant Feeding, and facilitating New Parents/Breastfeeding Support groups. She has a Masters Degree in Parent Child Nursing from Adelphi University.

For information on breast-feeding call

- **La Leche League at (800) LA-LECHE (800 525-3243); or go to their website at www.lalecheleague.org**
- **American Academy of Pediatrics at (800) 433-9016; or go to their website at www.aap.org**

Dear Reader

In our February issue Holly Shaw talked about children and grief. This month Cynthia Wagner discusses children and divorce. She offers sound, practical advice and information. Both articles together address the pain of loss for young children and help parents help their children through difficult times.

But, there is another aspect, helping you deal with your own sense of loss. For that, check out Vicki Lansky's *Divorce: 10 Things I learned After the Fact*.

Of course, we also have the Library Resources, and our Children's Health Corner. You'll notice that the name has changed. It used to be the Doctor's Corner, but we realized that many other professionals provide health information to parents. This month Fran Brenner talks about feeding your infant.

I've saved the best news for last. Although Susan Eaddy does the wonderful illustrations for *P&p Newsletter*, she actually has another life with RCA Records. This year, in that role, she was nominated for a Grammy for Best Art Direction for a CD Package. The CD was Los Super Seven, a Mexican roots package featuring the favorite songs of a variety of artists. Susan was one of only 5 nominees. Congratulations Susan, you are the best (but we always knew that)!

Remember that our next issue will be the combined July/August issue. Have a warm, wonderful June.

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

Divorce

In addition to these books, the Library Resources for September, 1998 contains reviews of other books for children on single parent issues.

For Children

🕮 ***It's Not Your Fault, Koko Bear*** by Vicki Lansky; illustrated by Jane Prince; Book Peddlers; Minnetonka, MN, 1998; Softcover, $5.99. Also available in Spanish (softcover, $7.99). "When PaPa Bear moves out of the house, everyone feels very sad. Koko begins to cry." So begins the story of Koko Bear and his parents' divorce. The book makes important points about parents divorcing each other, but not divorcing the children. At the bottom of each page there are hints and suggestions for helping children cope with the divorce and its aftermath.

🕮 ***Let's Talk About It: Divorce*** by Fred Rogers; Photographs by Jim Judkis; PaperStar; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.99. Fred Rogers brings his gentle style to this book on a difficult subject. He raises the issues and questions children have, but may not be able to express. Sit down with your youngster and this book and use it as a springboard for discussion, ending with a hug.

🕮 ***Mama and Daddy Bear's Divorce*** by Cornelia Maude Spelman; illustrated by Kathy Parkinson; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1998 Hardcover. Dinah is a bear with three favorite people – her mama, her daddy, and her big sister. But her parents are getting a divorce. Written in simple language for very young children, the book has a reassuring ending "... Ruth would always be her sister, her daddy would always be her daddy, and her mama would always be her mama. And they all loved her very much."

For Adults

🕮 ***Be a Great Divorced Dad*** by Kenneth N. Condrell, Ph.D. with Linda Lee Small; St. Martin's Press; New York, 1998; Softcover, $11.95. Kenneth Condrell writes not only as a psychologist but also as a divorced father. His book is filled with good advice, specific suggestions, and real-life examples on topics such as handling the holidays, the emotional rollercoaster, dealing with ex-spouses, and making the most of the time with your kids.

🕮 ***The Enlightened Stepmother: Revolutionizing the role***; Perdita Kirkness Norwood with Teri Wingender; Avon Books; New York, 1999; Paperback, $14.00. The authors suggest that the basic approach of most stepparenting guides is ways the new stepparent can fit into the existing family. The authors interviewed almost 200 stepmothers of various ages (from their 20s on up) facing different problems, and achieving different solutions.

🕮 ***Good Men: A practical handbook for divorced dads*** by Jack Feuer; Avon Books; New York, 1997; Paperback, $11.00. Written with honesty and sensitivity, the book discusses parenting after a divorce, and dispenses insight, support, and guidance. Topics include co-parenting, custody and legal issues, dating and responsible parenting.

🕮 ***Vicki Lansky's Divorce Book for Parents*** by Vicki Lansky; Book Peddlers; Minnetonka, MN, 1996; Softcover $5.99. Short, to-the-point sections discuss just about every aspect of separation and divorce for parents. Lansky talks about breaking the news, handling departure day, legalities, resource information and more. Her easy-to-read style is reassuring and helpful.

Computer Programs & Video Games

Finding the Best Ones for Kids

🖳 ***KidsScore® Parents Guide to Software and Video Games*** is available free from the National Institute on Media and the Family. You can obtain a free copy by calling toll free (888) 772-2264. The guide contains information on more than 70 parent-rated games, including a description and whether they feel it is appropriate for kids ages 3 to 7.

🖳 ***Children's Software Revue***. Although CSR is subscription-based, they also provide a website (http://www.childrenssoftware.com) with a free searchable database of reviews of software programs. This site also contains some of the features of the magazine.

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LOS NIÑOS Y EL DIVORCIO

Un Tema que Toca a Todos

El divorcio puede parecer una parte común y aceptada de la cultura social contemporánea, pero cuando este ocurre, es un momento de crisis para los padres y para los niños. Los padres generalmente se encuentran atrapados entro dos mundos distintos: el mundo de los adultos (y sus propias necesidades de adultos) y el de las necesidades de los bebés y los niños.

Los niños ven la separación y el divorcio como una experiencia angustiante. No pueden comprender por qué sus padres están infelices, por qué no ven a uno de los padres tanto como antes, o por qué tienen que vivir en una casa o departamento distinto. Para ellos, nada de esto tiene sentido.

Los padres deben estar atentos a la conducta de sus niños para poder ayudarlos con estos cambios y transiciones. Los padres también tienen que dar constante seguridad y apoyo, y permitir sus muchas preguntas, a medida que los niños intentan internalizar y comprender una situación que les es confusa. Los niños necesitan ser queridos, atendidos, y sobre todo tienen que saber que sus padres están cerca para atender cualquiera de sus necesidades.

Bebés y Niños Pequeños

Frecuentemente los padres suponen que los bebés y los niños que recién empiezan a andar, son demasiado pequeños como para tener conciencia de lo que está pasando en el hogar, y que esta experiencia no los afecta.

Evidentemente que los bebés no saben que significa un divorcio, pero si tienen conciencia de la vida cotidiana, de los gestos, y la disponibilidad de los padres. Un bebé que antes estaba acostumbrado a la seguridad de la voz calmante de una madre o padre, está "sintonizado" y notará un cambio súbito en su actitud. Por ejemplo, si ya no hay canciones, o los cuchicheos habituales, o el período habitual de ser tomado en brazos. El bebé definitivamente notará el distanciamiento de la madre y la consiguiente menor atención, o que el papá ya no juega en la tina de baño, sonriendo, haciendo ruidos raros y chapoteando el agua.

Los bebés de menos de seis o siete meses no tienen limites bien definidos. Aún no perciben que los padres y el bebé están física y mentalmente separados. Los bebés, simplemente, no pueden distinguir entre si mismos y sus padres. No pueden juzgar si el temor, pena, angustia, o separación está relacionado a lo que uno siente sobre si mismo o lo que uno está sintiendo sobre ellos. Ya que no pueden distinguir donde uno termina y el otro comienza, necesitan consistencia y estabilidad. Los llantos de hambre que antes eran atendidos con una alimentación rápida y caricias suaves, son ahora acogidos con modales bruscos e impaciencia, que confunden e irritan al bebé. Aunque dar un amor estable será difícil durante un divorcio y su secuela, los niños deben sentir completa confianza en la capacidad de los adultos de poder ser padres afectuosos. Esta confianza les permitirá desarrollar un visión de si mismos como seres buenos y que el mundo que los rodea es bondadoso y los apoya. También mantendrán su sentido de curiosidad innato, que es esencial para su desarrollo emocional y cognitivo.

Debido a la naturaleza del divorcio, un proceso que es generalmente considerado contestatario, los padres pueden tener que "aguantarse" sentimientos difíciles en vez de dar rienda suelta a sus emociones. Para muchos padres, el proceso de distanciamiento de lo que antes era una relación de pareja afectuosa y de una familia muy unida, puede ser un difícil golpe. Mientras que la separación puede ser inicialmente aceptada como un alivio, este sentimiento generalmente no dura mucho. Hay demasiados problemas complejos de índole financiero y prácticos aún por resolver.

Como resultado de todas estas presiones y problemas, los padres frecuentemente se enojan y se molestan, y algunos padres empiezan a culpar al bebé del fracaso matrimonial. Pero ni siquiera el bebé más difícil puede causar un divorcio en un matrimonio exitoso. Muy a menudo, estos sentimientos son una reacción a su propia furia sobre la situación. No obstante, no permita que su ira este dirigida al bebé. Su bebé solo se pondrá mas irritable, más confundido y molesto.

Es importante que un bebé se sienta seguro y que su vida cotidiana sea estable. Trate de mantener las mismas horas de comida, de siesta y de juego. Recuerde, los bebés son demasiado jóvenes para comprender un divorcio, pero pueden claramente percibir su estado de animo de acuerdo a sus respuestas emocionales.

Niños Pequeños y Preescolares

Aunque los niños parecieran ser demasiado jóvenes para entender la separación y el divorcio, no lo son. Frecuentemente tienen una mejor idea de que lo que esta pasando que lo que nos gustaría creer. Lo que les falta, muy a menudo, es la capacidad de expresar sus pensamientos, sentimientos y temores. Es esencial que los ayudemos con esta parte. Lo que les decimos deber ser expresado con las palabras más sencillas, claras y directas. "Juan, tu papi y yo te queremos mucho, tú eres lo más importante en el mundo, pero no estamos felices juntos. Hemos decidido que tenemos que dejar de pelear y de gritar y la única manera de hacerlo es viviendo en dos distintas casas. El papi (o la mami) se va a mudar a una nueva casa. Seguirá viéndote y jugando contigo, y te llamará cuando no te esté visitando. Ambos nos aseguraremos que estés bien cuidado. Siempre tendrás harto de comer, todos tus juguetes para jugar, y tu abuela y abuelo, y tía Susana vendrá a visitarte como siempre."

Algunos niños suponen que el divorcio es su culpa y para compensar pueden intentar en convertirse en niños perfectos, con la esperanza que esta conducta hará que sus padres se junten otra vez. Los padres, que en el fragor de la ira e infelicidad le dijeron a los niños que ellos eran la causa ("Nosotros nunca peleamos hasta que tú naciste".) tienen que alentarlos de una manera muy especial. Ud. tendrá que recordarles a sus niños que ellos no tienen ninguna responsabilidad. La mayoría de los niños piensan que si se hubiese portado mejor, hubiese dicho las cosas correctas en el momento adecuado, y no hubiese botado jugo en la alfombra de la sala, etc., sus padres no estarían peleando y pensando en vivir separados.

Distintos niños tendrán distintas reacciones a su separación y divorcio. Así como la mayoría de los niños sienten que son la causa del divorcio de sus padres, ellos también sentirán la necesidad de que Ud. se junte una vez más con su pareja. Después de meses de tuición conjunta, Daniel un preescolar finalmente confesó. "Es bastante entretenido tener mi propia habitación donde mi papi, pero este juego, de ir a la casa de mi papá y quedarme en mi casa cierto tiempo ya no es entretenido. No quiero seguir jugando este juego. Quiero que mi papi se venga a vivir a nuestra casa".

Las fantasías de la mami y el papi que viven en la misma casa otra vez no se descartan voluntariamente y pueden persistir por muchos años. Los niños pueden mantener esta esperanza bastante más allá de los años preescolares a pesar de que se les haya dicho muchas veces que esto nunca ocurrirá. Es apropiado para los padres abrazar al niño y decirle, "Mi amor, eres fantástica, tu papi y yo te queremos, ambos la pasamos tan bien contigo, etc., pero, a pesar que eres nuestra niñita especial, el papá y la mamá no pueden vivir juntos. Yo se que esto te apena, pero es mejor que nosotros vivamos separados. Pero ambos siempre te vamos a querer y proteger".

Algunos niños asumirán la responsabilidad de encargarse de la casa – cuidar a los hermanos menores, cocinar, limpiar– para ayudar al padre que parece no poder enfrentar las responsabilidades y para mejorar el ambiente con la esperanza de que el otro padre volverá. Otros niños pueden intentar sustraerse de la situación, ya que antes habían estado en el "fuego cruzado", atrapados entre las disputas de la madre y el padre. Algunos niños sufren una regresión. Algunos sufren una sensación de perdida. Los niños tienen que ser permitidos a compartir sus reacciones. La expresión de llanto, aislamiento, angustia, negación y ciertamente la confusión son todas normales. Durante este período es útil alentar a su niño a conversar sobre sus sentimientos. Sea paciente mientras escucha. No niegue sus percepciones, sino que trate de repetir y reflexionar sobre lo que está escuchando, y manifiésteselo de una manera que su niño perciba que Ud. ha comprendido. Ud. puede decir: "Parece que estás triste (preocupado, etc.)".

Hay algunas reglas básicas que Ud. puede intentar para disminuir futuros conflictos y tensiones entre Ud. y su ex, y también eliminar las desilusiones que sus niños puedan sufrir.

* A medida que los niños comprenden que significa vivir principalmente con la mamá o el papá, Ud. tendrá que apoyar cualquier horario que haya sido determinado para las visitas. Esto no solo incluye el horario semanal, sino que también para los días feriados, vacaciones y cumpleaños. Es útil que ambos padres concreten estos horarios sin el involucramiento de los niños. De esta manera los niños nunca estarán "en el medio".

* Los niños nunca deben ser usados como mensajeros. Cualquier información que Ud. quiere compartir con su cónyuge (o ex cónyuge) debe venir directamente de Ud., su abogado o mediador.

* Trate de no interrogar a sus niños sobre la conducta de su cónyuge cuando vuelvan de una visita. La mayoría de los niños contarán sus experiencias cuando estén listos si Ud. les permite. Si Ud. sabe algo que le preocupa, discretamente trate de esclarecer lo que están intentando de explicar. Recuerde que Ud. siempre puede ir directamente a la fuente (su cónyuge) si fuese necesario.

* A los niños nunca se les debieran pedir que guarden secretos. A la mayoría de los niños les cuesta hacer esto, especialmente a los más pequeños. Pedirles que no le cuenten algo a su otro padre puede confundirlos y angustiarlos. Pedirles que mantengan un secreto puede también promover un sentimiento de culpa si se sienten incómodos con lo que Ud. les está pidiendo. Pero lo más importante es que un niño nunca debe sentir que Ud. le está pidiendo que tomen parte contra el otro padre.

* Trate de no proyectar sus sentimientos sobre sus niños. Separe sus preocupaciones y necesidades de las de ellos. Si Ud. está teniendo dificultades en determinar que está sintiendo su hijo o como está enfrentando la situación en relación a lo que Ud. siente, siéntese con lápiz y papel y escriba sus pensamientos. Escribir es una herramienta que le puede dar una tremenda ventaja. En vez de sobre reaccionar, Ud. puede explorar sus inquietudes inmediatamente después de que las haya escrito, o guardarlas por un tiempo para examinarlas después. A veces un par de horas, o un día o dos, le ayudarán a tener una perspectiva más clara.

* Entienda que su objetivo es crear un espacio emocional seguro para su niño. Para hacer esto, Ud. nunca debe evitar preguntas difíciles con respuestas falsas. El niño que puede preguntar sobre la separación y el divorcio está listo para escuchar una explicación apropiada a la edad. Si en cualquier momento Ud. no se siente lista para contestarle a su niño sobre un tema especifico, no es necesario sentirse obligada a hacerlo. Es aceptable decirle a un niño que Ud. necesita más tiempo para pensar sobre la importante pregunta que ha sido planteada. Dígale que apenas pueda, Ud. le contará sus ideas en una conversación larga.

* Es esencial no asignar culpa, denigrar o decir cosas inapropiadas sobre su cónyuge en presencia de su niño. Los niños necesitan su otro padre y seguramente se ofenderán con sus comentarios negativos. Recuerde que su hijo quiere a ambos.

* El juego puede ser terapéutico. Los niños que tienen dificultades en expresar sus sentimientos y frecuentemente se refugian en sus juguetes; por ejemplo, su bloques, bates y pelotas, para así poder enfrentar su rabia o pesadumbre. De la misma manera, esta bien que se encariñen con una muñeca, cuidándola de la misma manera que ellos piensan que Ud. debiera cuidarlos a ellos. Ambos sexos se beneficiaran con juguetes que permiten, rabia, regresión, actuar como mamá y papá, y también muñecas y peluches. A los niños mayores, quizás Ud. les puede ofrecer títeres de mano o ropa vieja para que puedan disfrazarse y hacer los papeles de la mami, papi, o abuelos. Si Ud. tiene la suerte de ser invitado a jugar con ellos, observe su conducta silenciosamente. Algunas de sus interrogantes o temores pueden esclarecerse a medida que observa.

* Cuando es tiempo para que su hijo o hija pase las vacaciones o quizás parte de las vacaciones de verano con su otro padre, es importante que el pequeñuelo lo pase fantástico. Dígale que Ud. estará bien mientras ella está lejos y que pueden estar en contacto telefónico. Los feriados y las vacaciones deben estar libres de culpabilidad para los niños. Su tarea es pasarlo bien y no deben sentir que deben estar en la casa cuidándola a Ud.

* En todo momento es útil tener en mente que es normal que Ud. o su niño tengan problemas de adaptación, o dificultades con ciertas cosas. En esos momentos puede ser útil consultar a un profesional. Ud. puede acudir a un centro local de salud mental y solicitar una referencia o a un terapeuta privado. Esto siempre vale la pena considerar como una alternativa a sentirse atribulada o deprimida.

* Los niños pequeños

necesitan ser reasegurados que no serán abandonados emocional o físicamente. A pesar de que UD. ha inteligentemente explicado porqué la mamá y el papá no pueden vivir juntos, y que su niño no tiene ninguna culpa, Ud. tendrá que repetir esto muchas veces para que este mensaje 0se convierta paulatinamente en una realidad. De la misma manera que los adultos tienen dificultades en soltarse de su matrimonio, pocos niños pueden aceptar el divorcio de sus padres con facilidad. Y de la misma manera que los padres luchan a través del proceso, examinando sus sentimientos, encontrando nuevas rutinas que llenan sus necesidades, los niños también pasan a través de una experiencia similar.

Los niños pueden florecer en un hogar de un solo padre. El divorcio no tiene porque dominar todos los aspectos positivos de la vida de un niño, especialmente si ambos padres pueden resolver a intentar que la situación entre ellos quede a un nivel de bajo conflicto. Lo que parece determinar cuan bien va a funcionar un niño es si tiene una relación sólida con el padre y la madre. Una relación en la cual ambos padres pueden ser confiados a dar amor, apoyo, seguridad y respeto por sus necesidades.

Cynthia Wagner, CSW, está certificada en Trabajo Social Clínico y es Board Certified Diplomate en Social Work. Actualmente dirige el Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) para el North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center. La Sa. Wagner también tiene una práctica privada enfocada a la intervención de crisis y temas médicos con familias y niños.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

Pp Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award

Volume 14, Number 7 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* July/August 1999

SPECIAL GIFTS OUR CHILDREN RECEIVE FROM OTHERS

When I was born, my father's best friend gave me a gift. He gave me my education. He told my father that, no matter what school I wanted to attend or what I wanted to study, he would be responsible for paying for all of the costs throughout my lifetime. Every few months, this man would come to dinner at our house. I would have all of my school work and report cards ready and he would spend at least an hour with me, reviewing all of my achievements and discussing my future plans, both the immediate ones and the distant plans as well. This man's generosity, kindness, and interest made me feel strong and free. I always felt as through my life had no horizon - that there were no limits. Today I am a physician and I know that so much of what I have done goes back to this wonderful mentor.

In my life my teacher, Mr. Taverna, was a tremendous mentor and inspiration. I had always dreamed of being an astronaut. From the time I was a child, people had asked me "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I would always answer that I wanted to be an astronaut. This would always be followed by a polite snicker and a "Oh how nice!" kind of response. Mr. Taverna was the first person who didn't respond that way. I was stunned, he really believed that I could do it. He made it a reality. He told me "Well you are great in math and science, why don't you study to be an aerospace engineer - then you could apply to the space program?" Throughout my school years, he would pass on to me information about special summer engineering programs, write recommendations for me, and help me decide which classes to take. So now that is just what I'm doing. I'll have my engineering degree soon, and my application is on the way to NASA, all because Mr. Taverna made me believe that it could really happen and helped me to find the way to make it happen.

My grandmother had the greatest effect on my life. It wasn't anything she did that was special or different. It was just a kind of quiet trust and belief in me that made all of the difference. Whenever I would try something new, she was always there, smiling and cheering me on. If I succeeded, she would say "well I knew you would succeed". If I failed she would just smile and say "You'll just have to give it another try - you can do anything you set out to do." I remember one evening, standing in the darkened hallway, listening to a conversation between my parents and my grandmother. I shouldn't have been listening but I was. My mom and dad were talking about my grades, which weren't always the best. And my grandmother said "Don't worry, someday he'll just start trying and every thing will turn out fine. After all, he's the smartest kid I ever saw!" I couldn't believe my ears. Such belief was staggering. How would I ever live up to that kind of expectation? That day was a turning point in my life. I did start working harder in school and my grades got better and better. They got so good, in fact, that I earned a full scholarship to college. And I'm hoping to do even better there.

PS 028155

The development of every child is determined by many things. The parents' beliefs, personalities, values, and interactions with each other all influence a growing child as does the family's history, socialization patterns, emotional health, and cultural/ethnic orientation. But there is another crucial factor and that is the social environment: the people a child interacts with throughout his life.

Families don't exist in isolation. It is important for both parents and children to have sources for support beyond the immediate family. As soon as a child is born, she begins to interact with others who, as she grows, give her inspiration, direction, and motivation.

Often these important people are her parents. Parents are crucial but they can't always do and be everything to their kids. Up until recently, they weren't expected to. Extended family and tightly knit communities and neighborhoods were an important part of a child's world. Neighbors sat out on stoops and porches, talking and watching as children played. Local shop-keepers kept "an eye out" as children stopped in to buy bubble gum or comic books. Today, isolated families often live far from other family members, in secluded suburban areas where few people know or interact with their neighbors, and a growing number of latch-key children spend long hours alone in front of a television set or computer screen.

It is important for children to be encouraged to reach out toward other people in their world to learn new things and explore new ideas. Allowing our children to have relationships with others gives parents a chance to re-charge and re-group. Parents and kids then come together with a refreshed point of view that will open new avenues of communication for everyone.

When children form positive, multiple attachments to caring adults, they develop relationships that will nurture and support them. These positive relationships create a protective environment around a child that allows him a safe space in which to create himself; to develop skills; and to explore these new interests and ideas. Let's always remember that kids can't have too many people who genuinely care about them.

A Connection to the Past and A Sense of Family History

Aunts, uncles, and grandparents help give children a connection to their past which allows them to find themselves in their world. Intergenerational relationships give children a community of kin that they will keep with them throughout their lives.

Michelle spent a lot of time with her grandmother when she was growing up. Her grandmother often told her that she was very much like her great-grandmother, who had died many, many years before Michelle was born. Her grandmother had given her an old tintype photo of her great-grandmother. When she looked at the photo, Michelle recognized many of her own features in her great-grandmother's face. Over the years, she heard many stories of her great-grandmother. These stories became a kind of talisman for Michelle. Whenever something troubled her, she would think about how her great-grandmother might have handled it. Years later, Michelle still holds the stories about this long-distant relative close to her heart. The old yellowed photo is one of her dearest possessions.

Family stories and histories protect children, helping them to transcend time and distance and building walls of security around them. Close family connections give children a feeling of being part of something enduring that is built on love, and no one can have too much of that.

Nurturing Interests and Knowledge

When children have relationships with other caring adults, they are often exposed to new and stimulating areas of skill or knowledge. A friend may have a special interest that will connect with our children's interest, broadening what they know and experience.

Jean's mother had a close friend who was an avid gardener. Jean loved to go next door and "help" Mrs. Burgess when she worked in her garden. Through the years, Jean became more and more expert about plants and gardening as she and Mrs. Burgess formed a close and caring relationship. Jean's own family was not particularly interested in gardening and Jean might never have discovered her interest and talent for this pursuit were it not for this wonderful neighbor and family friend.

Maybe our child has a

talent that we do not recognize. Although we may want to be our child's mentor in every way, sometimes this just isn't possible. Sometimes a special teacher can fill that role.

Evan loved music. From a very early age he demonstrated a talent for musical instruments. Whenever he went shopping with his parents he could always be found in the toy department, tooting on horns, playing drums, or tinkling on toy pianos. His parents, struggling financially, were not able to indulge Evan's interest in any real way, but a kindergarten teacher did recognize this talent. She encouraged Evan and helped his family get a library card so that Evan could borrow music tapes and videos from the library. When he was old enough, she made sure that Evan was helped to join the school orchestra. Today, Evan is a professional musician and still mentions this extraordinary teacher's name whenever talking about his music and his childhood.

Other Cultures and Traditions

Some time spent in other cultural environments will also open whole new worlds to kids. These experiences will provide a greater understanding and appreciation of the wonderful, diversified world around us.

The first day Linda attended nursery school, she came home with stories of a new friend she had met. Suzanne was "pretty" and "smart" and Linda wanted to be Suzanne's best friend. And that is just what happened. Before much time had passed, Linda and Suzanne were inseparable. Then Suzanne's mother called to invite Linda to join their family for dinner. When Linda's mother dropped her off, she was surprised to find that Suzanne's family was Jamaican. Linda had never mentioned this. After this visit, Linda told her family about all of the different kinds of food they had eaten for dinner, about the beautiful scarf Suzanne's grandmother had worn tied around her hair, and about the glorious music she had heard while they ate dinner. Linda was anxious to invite Suzanne to her home so that she could share her own special Scottish heritage with her friend. Both children had a chance to enrich and enhance their world view at a very early age. Not only does this kind of exposure to different cultures and races increase tolerance, it opens exciting possibilities to children to develop within themselves a knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and heritages.

Enduring Values

Of course, when kids have a chance to really "see" the world around them from different views and vantage points, they learn important lessons. When we speak about things like honesty, charity, hard work, and dignity, these things are only words until a child sees for himself what they really mean.

A New World - A New Life

When I was almost five, my parents and I moved from a sun-drenched Middle East country to the concrete canyons of New York City. Within months, I started kindergarten and my parents left the cramped, shared space relatives had offered us and moved into our own apartment. It was really tiny, but larger than anything I had ever known. The apartment building was far from grand (actually it was probably a bit shabby), but in it my family found a treasure that would last a lifetime. We found, in an apartment on the other side of the building, a mentor, tutor, friend and guardian angel – a family that took us, a young overwhelmed immigrant family, and kept us safe and cared for.

They showed us how to shop at a grocery store, an amazing experience since we had come from near famine. They took my mother around to all the local shops, walked us both to the elementary school, invited me to watch TV in their house, helped my mother sign up for an English class. When the time came, they helped my parents become citizens. They even had a son, almost my own age, who became my instant playmate and tutor. But most special was Mrs. Milton, who quickly established herself as a grandmother to my family, in addition to her own. This was of special importance to me since I had no grandparents of my own. An immigrant herself, Mrs. Milton knew well how my parents felt and kept a watchful eye on all of us. Whether it was a special dish that she cooked in abundance so we could all share, or letting me slowly leaf through their encyclopedia, Mrs. Milton was always around. Armed with an apron and cooking spoon, she offered a comfort and safety that I had not known, and the opportunity to be embraced in the laughter and generosity of her extended family.

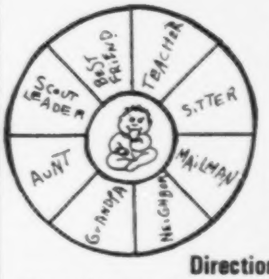
Sandra R. Wolkoff, CSW

Who knew he was so talented?

Mark's family lived in a wealthy suburb of a large metropolitan area. One afternoon, his nursery school class went to a special "Adopt-A-Grandparent" program at a inner-city nursing home. The children were encouraged to interact with the residents of the nursing home and, little-by-little, one of the residents would become a special "adopted" grandparent. As the other children spread out in the room, Mark seemed drawn to a wizened old man, sitting alone in a wheelchair in the corner. Over the next few weeks, Mark learned much about the hard life that this old man had led. Mr. Jeffreys had worked at many jobs throughout his life. He had lost his wife at a young age and had worked to raise his seven children all alone. Mr. Jeffreys fascinated Mark and made him see the quiet honor in a life well led. Mark also learned something more - that there is dignity and courage to be found everywhere. He learned about struggle and overcoming hardships. He learned about turning away from the wrong road and always choosing to be honest, even when the other road might be easier. He didn't know he was learning these lessons but he was.

All of these special relationships and partnerships can help our children develop the qualities we wish for them. We all want our children to be resilient and able to triumph over adversity. We hope that they will be leaders who can solve problems and learn to win as well as lose gracefully. We hope for creative children who have wonderful senses of humor. We want them to be honest and sensitive with good self-esteem. As parents we simply cannot be everything and do everything for our children all of the time throughout their lives. If we reinforce our children's ability to interact well with others, we give them a gift that will keep them strong, well-informed, and secure throughout their lives. The other people in our children's lives can give them very special gifts: helping them develop their individual talents; appreciating the world around them; learning to trust their own judgement; tackling tasks that challenge them; and finding out who they are. Isn't that what we all want?

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour is a freelance writer and the Public Information Officer of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center.



Who Are The Other Important People In Your Child's Life?

You may recognize this activity as a variation of the family tree often done in school. But this is a version all children can enjoy.

Directions: Draw a wheel in the center of a sheet of paper with a hub and spokes going outward to the rim. Show your youngster the wheel, with the center hub. Tell her that she is that hub, and fill in her name (or let her fill it in). Next, ask: "What adults do you see, or play with who you really like? Who likes to talk to you? Who do you like to play with? Who do you spend time with?"

If your child does not spontaneously answer, you can help him by suggesting some people who he sees. Don't be surprised if you hear about people you didn't really consider as candidates for "spoke" status. Children can make friends with the people who work at their school, who they see in the park, or who come over to their friends' houses. Write down these names, and a sentence about why your child feels each of them is special. Remember that children are more likely to name the people they see more frequently, and often don't remember the people, no matter how special, who they see less often. If there are people he is leaving out, you can help him remember.

You can even do this over the course of a week or so, starting with the idea of making a list, and then filling out the wheel when your youngsters have had a chance to think about it. When the names have been assembled, fill in the spokes putting a name on each one.

You can also wait until you've collected all the names to draw the spokes. This way you'll have exactly the right number of names and places. When its done, put it up on the wall of your child's room.

Dear Reader

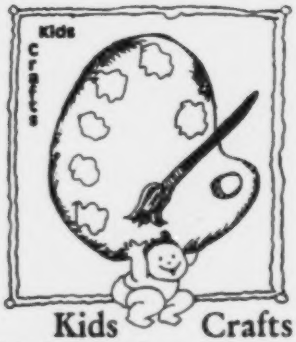
There wasn't much family around when I was growing up, and I can't honestly say there were family friends or neighbors who were active in my life. In retrospect, I think that was something I missed – the bonds that extended past immediate family. So, I was eager for my son to experience not only the love of his parents but also the nurturing of others – the neighbors, and family friends so treasured they became "aunts" and "uncles." His honorary "Uncle" Mike took him sailing, "Aunt" Barbie listened to the stories he wouldn't tell his parents, and our next-door-neighbor John patiently tossed balls back and forth.

This month's issue is dedicated to those other significant people in your child's life. Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour has written a beautiful and evocative piece on the special "gifts" given to our children by others. Sandy Wolkoff has written a personal memory of the joys of having other supportive people in her life. Finally, take a minute to sit down with your child and fill in the wheel of important people.

I know it's summer and no one, least of all me, wants to think about Fall, but check out the resources to help your child make the transition to nursery, preschool, or kindergarten.

And most of all enjoy your summer! See you back here in September.

Neala Schwartzberg



Kids Crafts

It's Summer!

There is something magical about making things, and young children can satisfy their love of whimsy by transforming materials into unique treasures. Get your child involved, and fight summer boredom too, by making crafts.

Sun Prints

You will need: a sunny, bright, dry day, colored construction paper, natural materials like pine cones, flowers, dandelions, leaves, acorns, and rocks to use as weights. *First, go for a nature walk to collect materials. Discuss the fascinating things you see and hear. Your preschooler will want to examine every leaf, flower, and stone. Let your child gather a few of her favorites. When you get home have your child lay out these objects on the construction paper in the design of her choice. Then, put the paper in the sun using the rocks as weights. Leave the print outdoors until the sun sets. Bring it back inside, remove the materials, and discover the images beneath. You'll have an interesting composition of the great outdoors.*

Bubble Blowing Painting

You will need: 4 small containers, food coloring (green, yellow, red, and blue), bubble blowing liquid and four wands, white paper. *Arrange the containers in an area in which they can stay overnight. Fill each with some of the bubble blowing liquid and a wand. Next, add several drops of food coloring to each container. Let this stand overnight. The next day, have your child dip the wand into their choice of color and blow bubbles directly onto the white paper. Do this with each of the colors. The bubbles will blend into each other and form patterns. The result will be a colorful hodgepodge of bubble prints.*

Watercolor Shapes

You will need: watercolors, brushes, watercolor paper, magic markers. *First have your child freely paint with the watercolors covering the entire sheet of paper. When it is dry have your child look for the pictures (or shapes) he sees in the painting. Outline these shapes with the magic makers. Ask your child to tell you about the shapes and the picture they create. Write this down and display next to the paper.*

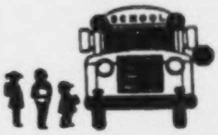
Tear Ups

You will need: assorted colors of tissue paper, crayons or magic markers, glue diluted with water, large, soft brushes, construction paper. *First tear up the tissue paper into a potpourri of shapes and sizes. Next encourage your child to plan the picture she wants to draw. Have her draw it on the construction paper. Then, using the diluted glue, have your child "paint" the construction paper, following the lines of the design and filling it in. While the glue is still wet, have your child add the tissue paper within the borders of the design.*

Beach Sculpture

You will need: driftwood, shells, sea grass, empty crab shells, pebbles, glue or rubber cement. *Children always find "treasures" at the beach. Let your child bring home some of these riches and save them. Then, one rainy day when he can't go out and play, he can glue his mementos on the driftwood, using it as the base for a sculpture.*

Dawn Marie Barhyte



Time for School

As August drifts slowly toward September, our thoughts begin to turn away from swimming and corn-on-the-cob to nursery school and kindergarten. We get jittery about this first classroom experience. Kids think about whether they will like the teacher; if they will feel afraid without mommy or daddy around; and if they will make friends. Parents will be thinking wistfully about how quickly their child has grown to reach this day; how they can help their child make a smooth and easy transition to this new part of his life; and what will be expected in a challenging new classroom. So as the calendar changes, parents can help children prepare for school.

Arrange for your child to visit the school and meet her teacher(s) before the first day of school. Be sure that you help her to find the bathrooms, the coatrooms, the playground, and the cafeteria. If your child will be starting school with friends or has a friend already attending the school, perhaps this visit can be made together. Almost all schools have a formal orientation program, but if your school doesn't, call and arrange for a visit prior to classes beginning.

Before school starts, talk about the first day with your child. Help him decide what he will wear, what he will take with him, and what kind of lunch he would like. If he seems very fearful, call his teacher to discuss how to make the school experience positive.

At the end of the first day, have a family celebration. Prepare her favorite foods, set aside a special time to talk about the day. Help her find ways to make things better if there were problems. Encourage her to list the things she especially enjoyed.

And, most important of all, be sure that you are available during that first day in case the teacher needs to reach you for any reason. Remember, if your child has a medical condition make sure that you have informed the school and teacher about it.

With just a little forethought, the first day of school can be just the beginning of an exciting part of your child's life. Our children's first steps into the "real" world can be wonderful if we help them prepare.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Starting School

📖 ***All My Feelings at Preschool: Nathan's Day*** by Susan Conlin and Susan Levine Friedman; illustrated by M. Kathryn Smith; Parenting Press, Inc.; Seattle, WA, 1991; Softcover, $6.95. This book focuses on feelings children can have within the preschool setting (although they can have these feelings in other settings too). Simple black and white drawings illustrate Nathan's feelings.

📖 ***Franklin's Class Trip*** by Paulette Bourgeois and Sharon Jennings; illustrated by Brenda Clark; Scholastic, Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $4.50. Franklin is excited about his class trip to the museum but he believes there are real dinosaurs inside. None of his classmates are worried, and neither is Franklin when he discovers that it is only the bones of the dinosaurs.

📖 ***Froggy Goes to School*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz; Puffin Books; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.99. Froggy's first day at school started out to be a disaster when he jumped on the bus in his underwear! But that was only a dream. His father wakes him up and off he goes to have a good day at school.

📖 ***Jessica*** by Kevin Henkes; Mulberry Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.95. Ruthie Simms had a best friend who came with her on her first day of kindergarten. But Jessica was an imaginary friend. When a little girl came up to Ruthie in school and identified herself as Jessica, Ruthie knew she found a real Jessica to have as a friend.

📖 ***Little Monster Goes to School***; Alison Inches; illustrated by Richard Brown; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover lift-the-flap, $5.99. Little Monster doesn't want to go to nursery school. With cookies and juice, dress up and other fun activities, the time goes by so quickly that soon his mother is there to take him home. Kermit the frog is the teacher in this Muppet book.

📖 ***Monster Goes to School*** by Virginia Mueller; pictures by Lynn Munsinger; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1991; Softcover. A gentle book about Monster's day at school. Monster can tell time at school; playtime, storytime, lunchtime and more.

📖 ***Rex and Lilly: Schooltime*** by Laurie Krasny Brown; pictures by Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1997; Hardcover, $12.95. Three stories about going to school; show and tell, trading lunches and learning to read. One of the Dino Easy Reader series for early readers.

📖 ***Will You Come Back for Me?*** by Ann Tompert; pictures by Robin Kramer; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1988; Softcover, $5.95. Suki is worried about going to Mrs. Clara's Child Care Center. She's afraid her mother won't remember to come back. Her mother makes a big red heart with Suki's name on it, and tears into two pieces. "When I leave you at Mrs. Clara's on Monday, I'll leave a part of my heart, too." So, of course she'll remember to pick up Suki. "I can't let Mrs. Clara have a part of my hear very long, can I?"

Books Celebrating Special People

📖 ***In the Rain with Baby Ducks*** by Amy Hest; illustrated by Jill Barton; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Paperback, $5.99. Baby Duck doesn't like the rain. Whoever heard of a duck who doesn't like water? But her Grampa understands and gives the little duckling boots to splash in and a special bunny umbrella. Then Baby Duck and Grampa go off to play in the rain.

📖 ***Little Cliff and the Porch People*** by Clifton L. Taulbert; paintings by E. B. Lewis; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Clifton Taulbert revisits the loving community which helped raise him in the Mississippi Delta of the 1950s. Little Cliff's grandmother is going to make her candied sweet potatoes and he is sent off to borrow a pound of special butter. Along the way, each of the neighbors not only contributes an ingredient to the recipe, but also gives a sense of community and caring to Little Cliff.

📖 ***Thank you, Mr. Falker*** by Patricia Polacco; Philomel Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.99. In this autobiographical book Mr. Falker, an extraordinary teacher, discovers that Trisha can't read. For years she tried to hide that fact, fearing she isn't smart enough to learn. Instead, she needs to learn to read a different way. After school this dedicated and loving teacher tutors the young girl until one day the letters and words fall into place, and Trisha reads.

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REGALOS ESPECIALES QUE NUESTROS HIJOS RECIBEN DE OTROS

Cuando nací, el mejor amigo de mi padre me dio un regalo. Me dio mi educación. Le dijo a mi padre que, que no obstante a que escuela quisiera ir o que quisiera estudiar, el sería responsable de pagar todos los costos a través de mi vida. Cada cierto tiempo, este señor venía a cenar a nuestra casa. Yo tenía listo todo mi trabajo de la escuela y las libretas de notas, y el se pasaba por lo menos una hora conmigo, repasando todos mis logros y discutiendo todos mis planes para el futuro, incluyendo los de corto plazo tanto como los de largo plazo. La generosidad, bondad, e interés de este hombre me hacían sentir fuerte y libre. Yo siempre sentía como si mi vida no tenía límites. Hoy soy médico y se que tanto de lo que he hecho comienza con este maravilloso mentor.

Mi abuela tuvo el efecto más importante en mi vida. No eran las cosas que hacía que eran especiales o diferentes. Era una especie de confianza silenciosa y fe hacia mi lo que era importante. Cada vez que yo intentaba hacer algo nuevo, ella siempre estaba ahí, sonriendo y alentándome. Si yo lo lograba, ella decía "bueno, yo sabía que tendrías éxito". Si yo fracasaba, ella simplemente sonreía y decía "simplemente lo tendrás que intentar otra vez. Tú puedes hacer cualquier cosa que te propones". Me acuerdo de una noche, parada en el corredor oscuro, escuchando una conversación entre mis padres y mi abuela. No debí haber estado escuchando pero lo hice. Mi papá y mi mamá estaban hablando sobre mis notas, que no siempre eran las mejores. Y mi abuela dijo, "No se preocupen, algún día empezará a empeñarse y todo saldrá bien. Después de todo, "¡es el chico más inteligente que he visto!" No podía creerlo. Su fe era extraordinaria. ¿Cómo podría llenar ese tipo de expectativas? Ese día fue un día clave de mi vida. Empece a trabajar más en la escuela y mis notas subieron y subieron. De hecho subieron tanto que me gané una beca completa para la universidad. Y espero que incluso me vaya mejor allá.

En mi vida mi profesor, el Sr. Taverna, fue un maravilloso mentor e inspiración. Yo siempre había soñado ser astronauta. Desde niño, la gente me preguntaba, ¿"Qué quieres ser cuando seas grande"? Yo siempre contestaba que quería ser astronauta. Esta respuesta siempre estaba acompañada por una risita educada y una respuesta tipo "Oh, que bonito". El Sr. Taverna fue la primera persona que no *respondió de esa manera. Quede asombrado, el verdaderamente creía que yo podía lograrlo. Él lo hizo realidad. Me dijo, "Bueno, eres excelente en matemáticas y ciencia, ¿por qué no estudias para ser un ingeniero aeroespacial, y después podrías hacer una solicitud al programa espacial"? Durante todos mis años en la escuela, el me daba información sobre programas especiales de ingeniería durante el verano, escribía recomendaciones, y me ayudaba a decidir que clases tomar. Eso es exactamente lo que estoy haciendo ahora. Pronto tendré mi título de ingeniero, y mi solicitud está en camino a la NASA, y todo porque el Sr. Taverna me hizo creer que esto realmente podía concretarse y me ayudo a encontrar el camino para lograrlo.*

El desarrollo de cada niño es determinado por muchas cosas. Las creencias de los padres, las personalidades, los valores y la interacción entre todos afecta a un niño en su desarrollo, al igual que la historia de la familia, patrones de socialización, salud emocional, y orientación étnica/cultural. Pero hay otro aspecto vital: el entorno social, es decir, las personas con las cuales un niño interacciona a través de su vida.

Las familias no existen aisladas. Es importante que ambos padres y niños tengan fuentes de apoyo más allá de la familia primaria. Apenas nace el niño, empieza a relacionarse con otros que, a medida que ella crece, le brindan inspiración, dirección, y motivación. Frecuentemente estas personas importantes son sus padres. Los padres son vitales pero no siempre pueden hacer y ser todo para sus hijos. Hasta hace poco esto no se esperaba de ellos. La familia ampliada y las comunidades y barrios fuertemente unidos eran una parte importante del mundo de un niño. Los vecinos se sentaban en las escaleras o en los porches, conversando y cuidando a los niños que jugaban. Los almaceneros locales "vigilaban" a los niños que venían a comprar chicle o historietas. Hoy las familias aisladas frecuentemente viven lejos de otros miembros de la familia, en áreas suburbanas aisladas donde muy poca gente conocen o se relacionan con sus vecinos, y un gran numero de niños con llave propia se pasan largas horas solos en frente de un televisor o la pantalla de una computadora.

Hoy es importante que los niños sean alentados a relacionarse con otras personas en su mundo para que aprendan cosas nuevas y exploren nuevas ideas. Permitirle a nuestros niños a que se relacionen con otros, les da a los padres la oportunidad de revitalizarse y de reafirmarse. Más tarde, los padres y niños se pueden juntar con un punto de vista más fresco que abrirá nuevos caminos de comunicación para todo el mundo. Cuando los niños forman múltiples relaciones positivas con adultos responsables, desarrollan relaciones que los sustentarán y apoyaran. Estas relaciones positivas crean un entorno protector alrededor del niño que le permite un espacio seguro en el cual crearse a si mismo; para desarrollar habilidades y para explorar estos nuevos intereses e ideas. Siempre debemos recordar que los niños nunca pueden tener demasiadas personas que genuinamente los quieren.

who knew he was so talented?

Una Vínculo al Pasado y un Sensación de Historia Familiar

Las tías, tíos, y abuelos le ayudan a los niños a tener un vínculo con su pasado que les permite encontrarse en su mundo. Las relaciones intergeneracionales les entrega a los niños una comunidad de parentesco que mantendrán a través de sus vidas.

Michelle pasó mucho tiempo con su abuela cuando estaba creciendo. Su abuela frecuentemente le decía que ella era muy parecida a su tatarabuela que había fallecido muchos años antes que Michelle naciera. La abuela de Michelle le había regalado una vieja fotografía de su tatarabuela. Cuando vio la foto, Michelle reconoció muchos de sus propios rasgos en la cara de su tatarabuela. A través de los años, Michelle escuchó muchos cuentos sobre su tatarabuela. Estos relatos se convirtieron en una especie de talismán para Michelle. Cada vez que algo la atribulaba, ella pensaba como lo manejaría su tatarabuela. Años después, Michelle aún tiene los cuentos de su pariente lejana cerca de su corazón. La fotografía amarillenta es una de sus posesiones más queridas.

Las historias y anécdotas familiares protegen a los niños, ayudándoles a trascender el tiempo y la distancia y construye murallas de seguridad a su alrededor. Los estrechos vínculos familiares le dan a los niños una sensación de ser parte de algo duradero que está construido sobre la base de amor, y nadie puede tener demasiado de eso.

Formado Intereses y Conocimientos

Cuando los niños tienen relaciones con otros adultos interesados, frecuentemente están expuestos a nuevos e estimulantes campos de conocimientos y destrezas. Un amigo puede tener un interés especial que se vinculará con los intereses de nuestros niños, ampliando lo que saben y experimentan.

La madre de Jean tenía una buena amiga que era una entusiasta jardinera. A Jean le encantaba ir al lado y "ayudar" a la Sra. Burgess cuando trabajaba en su jardín. A través de los años, Jean se fue convirtiendo en una experta en plantas, y ella y la Sra. Burgess formaron una relación estrecha y de mucho amor. La familia de Jean no estaba especialmente interesada en la jardinería y quizás Jean nunca hubiese descubierto su interés y talento para esta actividad si no hubiese sido gracias a esta maravillosa vecina y amiga de la familia.

Quizás nuestro niño tiene un talento que no reconocemos. A pesar de que queremos ser el mentor de nuestro niño en todo, a veces esto simplemente no es posible. A veces un profesor especial puede jugar ese papel. Evan amaba la música. Desde muy temprana edad demostró un talento para los instrumentos musicales. Cada vez que salía de compras con sus padres se le podía encontrar en la juguetería, soplando las cornetas, tocando la batería, o jugando con las teclas de los pianos de juguete. Sus padres que tenían problemas económicos, no podían satisfacer el interés de Evan de ninguna manera. Sin embargo, una maestra del jardín infantil si reconoció este talento. Ella alentó a Evan y ayudó a su familia a obtener una tarjeta para la biblioteca para que Evan pudiera sacar cintas y videos musicales. Cuando tuvo suficiente edad, se aseguro que ayudaran a Evan a entrar a la orquesta del colegio. Hoy, Evan es un músico profesional y aún menciona el nombre de este extraordinario maestro cuando habla de su música y de su infancia.

Otras Culturas y Tradiciones

El tiempo que se pasa en otros ambientes culturales también abrirá otros mundos completamente nuevos para los niños. Estas experiencias darán una mejor comprensión y aprecio del maravilloso y diverso mundo que nos rodea.

El primer día que Linda fue al jardín infantil, llegó a la casa con cuentos de una nueva amiga que había conocido. Suzanne era "bonita" e "inteligente" y Linda quería ser la mejor amiga de Suzanne. Y eso fue justamente lo que pasó. Al poco tiempo, Linda y Suzanne eran inseparables. Entonces la madre de Suzanne llamó para invitar a Linda a comer con la familia. Cuando la madre de Linda la fue a dejar, se sorprendió al comprobar que la familia de Suzanne era de Jamaica. Linda nunca había mencionado esto. Después de la visita, Linda le contó a su familia sobre todas los distintos tipos de comida durante la cena, sobre el pañuelo maravilloso que la abuela de Suzannne había usado amarrado al pelo, y sobre la estupenda música que habían escuchado mientras comían. Linda estaba ansiosa de invitar a Suzanne a la casa para poder compartir su propio patrimonio escocés con su amiga. Ambas niñas tuvieron la oportunidad de enriquecer y agrandar su visión del mundo a muy temprana edad. Este tipo de contacto a distintas culturas y razas no solo aumenta la tolerancia, sino que abre ricas posibilidades a los niños para que desarrollen dentro de ellos mismos un conocimiento y aprecio de otras culturas y patrimonios.

Valores Perdurables

Evidentemente, cuando los niños tienen la oportunidad de verdaderamente "ver" el mundo que los rodea de diferentes ópticas y perspectivas, ellos aprenden lecciones importantes. Cuando hablamos de cosas como la honestidad, caridad, trabajo y dignidad, estas cosas son solo palabras hasta que un niño vea personalmente que lo que realmente significan.

La familia de Mark vivía en un suburbio adinerado de una gran zona metropolitana. Una tarde, su curso del jardín infantil fue a un programa especial, "Adopte a un Abuelo" en un hogar de ancianos en el centro de la ciudad. A los niños se les alentaba que se relacionaran con los residentes del hogar y, poco a poco, uno de los residentes se convertía en un abuelo especial "adoptado". A medida que los otros niños se diseminaban en la sala, Mark parecía atraído por un anciano con cara de sabiduría que estaba sentado solo en una silla de ruedas en un rincón. Durante las próximas semanas Mark se enteró sobre la difícil vida que había tenido este anciano. El Sr. Jeffreys había trabajado en muchas cosas durante su vida. Había perdido su esposa a una temprana edad y había trabajado para criar a sus siete hijos solo. El Sr. Jeffreys fascinaba a Mark y lo ayudo a comprender el silencioso honor de una vida provechosa. Mark también aprendió otra cosa: que la dignidad y el coraje se puede encontrar en todas partes. Aprendió sobre la lucha y la superación de obstáculos. Aprendió sobre apartarse del camino equivocado y siempre optar por ser honesto, aún cuando el otro camino puede ser más fácil. No sabía que estaba aprendiendo esas lecciones pero lo estaba.

Todas estas relaciones y compañías especiales pueden ayudar a nuestros niños a desarrollar las cualidades que todos queremos para ellos. Todos queremos que nuestros hijos sean fuertes y que puedan triunfar sobre la adversidad. Esperamos que sean líderes que pueden resolver problemas y que aprendan a ganar con gracia y también a perder. Esperamos hijos creativos con un magnifico sentido de humor. Queremos que sean honestos y sensitivos con buena autoestima. Como padres simplemente no podemos ser y hacer todo por nuestros hijos todo el tiempo a través de sus vidas. Si reforzamos la habilidad de nuestros hijos de relacionarse bien con otros, les hemos dado un regalo que la mantendrá fuerte, bien informada, y segura a través de su vida. Las otras personas en las vidas de nuestros hijos les pueden entregar regalos muy valiosos: ayudándolos a desarrollar sus talentos individuales; a que aprecien el mundo que los rodea; a aprender a confiar en su propio juicio; a enfrentar tareas que los desafían; a descubrir quienes son. ¿No es eso lo que todos queremos?

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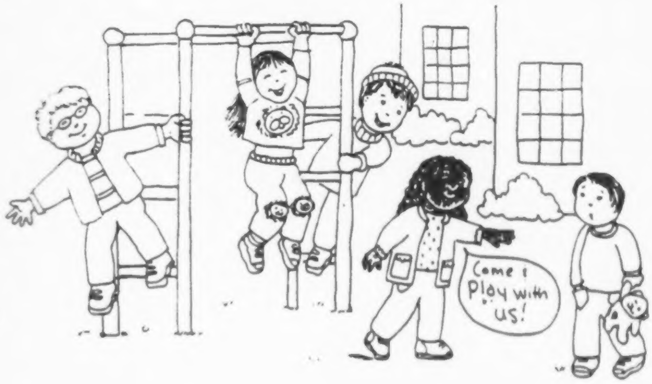
SOCIALLY SKILLED CHILDREN

Raising Kids Who Make Friends


Come & play with us!

"What were you thinking when you held him for the first time," I asked my friend Dana, a smart and sensitive woman, a day after she gave birth to Liam, her first child, knowing that is a time for secret dreams to reveal themselves. "You know," she said, seeming surprised at her own answer, "I just kept looking at him hoping he'll have friends and be well-liked."

Judging from the shelves on parenting in our bookstores – clearly an index of our anxieties -- we admit to wanting smarter kids, kids who know how to think, more confident kids, kids with more self-esteem, kids who are happy, who are proud, who are responsible, and even kids who can kick Type A personality traits.

But we have not yet begun to talk openly about wanting kids who are popular. It's as if there's a taboo against saying it out loud. Social life is typically regarded as trivial. This is undoubtedly due to a misconception about what popularity really means.

For children, however, popularity is far from trivial. It's about being well-liked by peers. It is about furnishing a context for mental growth, and about developing the social skills that underlie relationships that endure for life. It also turns out that the same qualities that make children well-liked by peers foster a more humane and moral world.

What do children like in other children?

Popular kids are not only friendly, they are often good kids. When school children rate their peers and rate the qualities that influence their choices, helpfulness comes out on top. Kids like kids who help them when they need it and who try to help someone who has been hurt. They want as their friend a child who shows sympathy for someone who has made a mistake, and who helps other children who are having trouble with a task.

Being socially competent, popular children do not bully, nor are they bullied so they are less likely to construct a worldview in which inflicting pain is justified or necessary. They grow up with a moral component to their behavior. But it is not only that they are kind, or good-natured; they learn, early on, how to handle the conflict that is inevitable in interpersonal relationships.

Even in preschool, differences in social competence can be distinct. Consider a simple exchange that occurred in a classroom of four-year-olds, as observed by psychologist Jacquelyn Mize of Auburn University in Alabama: Wendy is busily setting a table in the housekeeping corner when Angela approaches. Looking up, Wendy says: "You can play; you be the baby. I have to go to work now." "I don't want to be a baby – I want to be the mommy," Angela responds petulantly. "I know; you can be the other mommy and we can have coffee at work," Wendy counters affably. Angela appears to accept this suggestion and Wendy rummages through a pile of dress-up clothes to find a pair of high heels, which Angela puts on. Angela clomps to the toy typewriter and bangs on the keys. "Yeah," Wendy exclaims exuberantly, "we gotta get our work done fast."

For all its seeming inconsequence, this little interaction is really quite remarkable. It's about very young children

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spontaneously solving the same kind of sophisticated social problems adults face all the time at work, at love, at home, or at play -- assimilating a new person into an ongoing activity, defusing defiance, finding common ground, turning a potential enemy into an ally, recruiting the support and cooperation of another, enlisting others in the pursuit of a goal. What's more, the four-year-olds solve them with enviable ease and directness, while keeping it all a game.

Socially skilled children are responsive and sensitive to others.

Wendy is positive and agreeable, even in the face of her play partner's negativity. She has transformed a potentially unpleasant episode into a positive one, by use of a "turnabout": rejecting one offer but simultaneously initiating a new offer, in keeping with the topic, to create a new acceptance. Whether toddlers or adults, well-liked and socially competent people have a generally positive orientation and they offer positive suggestions or directions to peers.

Wendy is "tuned in" to the situation and the context. The offer to Angela of a pair of high heels is relevant to Angela's interest in being a mommy. Yet it's in Wendy's orbit of interest, too; creating another mommy-worker continues the previous line of play without interruption. Socially competent children pay attention, yet are flexible and even creative; they can adapt what they are doing to accommodate others; they have the ability to consider others' ideas for play. They find a role for others.

And Wendy's behavior is synchronous; she positively meshes her actions with the behavior of her partner in this exchange. When Angela flatly rejected Wendy's first suggestion to "be the baby," Wendy immediately countered with an alternative, one that amplified Angel's interests. There was a kind of rhythmic dance, a reciprocity of movement. Socially skilled children are responsive and sensitive to others.

Wendy is so accomplished that she has created Angela's success at what is probably the most daunting of social tasks for children (and scarcely a breeze for adults)--to enter into joint play with another child, and to be assimilated into a group. Given the mobility of American families and the frequency with which children are relocated to new schools, this may be one of the most useful of abilities. It is definitely the most important task because gaining entry into peer play is a prerequisite for all further social interaction.

Yet even for popular kids this is a difficult challenge. In one study of second- and third-graders, 26 percent of the efforts of popular students were rejected or ignored by their classmates. Among children in nursery school, even those who know each other well, over 50 percent of all entry attempts are rejected; 54 percent of the time, the response to the question "Can I play?" is "No, you're not our friend." The obvious conclusion is that even the best attempts to enter into play with others may sometimes be met with rejection.

But when popular children make approaches that are in fact rejected, they don't attribute the rejection to their own incompetence, unlikability, or other internal causes. They assume rejection can result from many factors--incompatibility, someone else's bad mood, a misunderstanding. They develop an attitude of resilience.

And should they reject others' efforts to join with them, they do it in a positive way; they invariably offer a reason or counter with an alternative idea: "You can bring the fire engine over here later." Or "When we need a mommy you can come and be her."

One reason popular children are popular is that, even in preschool, they are highly skilled at information-gathering. They make good judgments about when to enter into the play of others, and can wait until there is room in an activity for another person. They "read" others' intentions well. They are sensitive to signals from peers that convey such information as what their interests are, or whether they want to be left alone.

These children respond in a clear and highly connected way to others' offers to join in the play, a way that is compatible and contingent to what is said to them. And they communicate simply; they don't blurt out embarrassing things about their feelings but offer concrete information about the situation they're in.

Even in preschool, popular children can recognize the expression of specific emotions, and they do this before they can verbally put a label on the feelings. They understand what gives rise to emotions in themselves and ultimately in others. They come to see that there is a relationship between emotions, situations, and events that stir them up, and how that translates into behavior. As a result, they can respond to the emotional needs of others.

Popularity Is Important

Peer relationships in childhood are not just sensitive gauges of children's psychological functioning; they are the best available indicators of how children will eventually turn out. Popularity often is the single greatest determinant in a child's happiness and success at school. Children who have no friends there, typically hate going to school. Some may even drop out.

Socially skilled children make good judgements about when to enter into the play of others.

Further, popularity requires a sophisticated intelligence. If there's any doubt that accurately interpreting people's expressive behavior–understanding their facial expressions, the reasons and meaning of their verbal statements–is a cognitive high-wire act, involving complex reasoning, perhaps the results of studies of hundreds of children will be persuasive. Even discounting differences in IQ, elementary-school children who score well on understanding emotional expression also score well on tests of math and reading achievement. The same children are also rated as likable by their peers.

Despite its importance, we have taken too much of the peer play out of childhood. Americans have spent the past two decades hurrying their children to grow up. In fact, for some children, all "leisure" time has been sacrificed to the competitive fast track crammed with all kinds of lessons and activities. This is not the natural way childhood wends its way to adulthood. In this hothouse environment, even nursery and preschool has been intellectualized–peer play has been almost totally removed.

Yet, like Dana, every parent truly wants to raise children who are well-liked by their peers. Popularity is not only one of the few early signs of our success at the long-term enterprise of parenting, it is one of the few early indicators that our children have a good shot at attaining satisfaction in the life they must eventually build for themselves. Honestly recollect your own school years: the social life of children colors the entire experience of childhood.

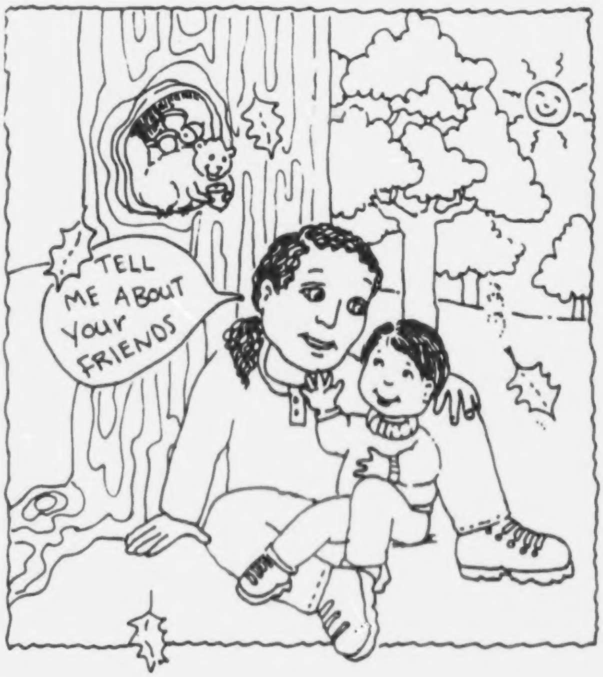
The Family Context

Many people think that popularity is mainly luck–something that happens to a favored few. But popularity is the result of measurable attitudes and behavioral skills that can be deliberately and successfully cultivated. Children become social beings only through interactions with others.

It's clear that children develop first in a family context. Of all the things that parents can do to foster their children's social development, these are the most important:

1. *Teach your child how to deal with social failure.* Everyone's best efforts at acceptance will sometimes be rejected. Rebuffs are a fact of life even for the popular. It's crucial to acknowledge and respect children's hurt feeling ("I know you feel disappointed"), but it's equally crucial to encourage children to try again ("but I'm sure you'll have another chance tomorrow"). Studies show that when faced with failure, children who are well-liked by peers respond by saying things like, "Well, can I play next time?" They turn a negative response into a counter proposal.

2. *Encourage a sense of humor.* Humor is the single most prized social skill, the fast track to being liked at all ages. Humor works even in threatening situations because it defuses negativity and disarms bullies. There's no recipe for creating a sense of humor, but you can look at the funny side of things and help your children do that, too. Cut out funny pictures from newspapers and magazines and share them with your kids. Tell them about funny things that happened to you during the day. Tell (clean) jokes to your kids, and let them tell you ones. Be sure to laugh, or at least smile–remember, children learn both from their failures and from their successes.


TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

3. *Respond in a supportive way when your child needs help with something.* Do not be dismissive. Make positive remarks about the work or the child's functioning not negative remarks. Offer suggestions and avoid giving directives. Encourage your child and don't give negative commands. Communicate affection and provide explanations for how things work.

4. *Get to know your child's world.* Spend time observing your child. Ask your child, "How did things go today?", or "Tell me what your day was like." "Who is nice in your class?" "Who is mean?" "Who are your friends?" "What kinds of things do you like to do together with your friends?" "Who in your class really likes you?" "How do you know?" "Who do you think doesn't like you?" "How do you know?" "What kinds of things do you say to him/her?" "Do you ever wish you had more friends?"

Listen to your child. Smile at your child. Touch your child. Nod in response to your child's conversation. And be sure to demonstrate that you have all the time in the world to hear what your child has to say. Turn off the phone, or at least turn on the answering machine. Or go for a walk in the woods. Only then will your child feel comfortable enough to reveal his world.

5. ***Pay attention to how peers treat your children.*** Children who are being picked on are often afraid or ashamed to bring up the subject. Parents must. Be gentle about it. Ask her to tell you something good that happened that day. Then ask her to tell you something bad that happened.

6. ***Share freely your own experiences as a child, especially those times when you were uncertain or worried about something.*** "Did I ever tell you about the time my best friend threw rocks at me, how terrible I felt?" This helps make your children feel less alone with their peer problems, and provides a model for what to do and how to behave.

7. ***Foster your child's verbal skills.*** Social competence both hinges on verbal ability and kindles verbal fluency. So even before they can talk to you, talk to your kids. They won't understand what you say, but they will acquire the fundamental rhythms of conversation, the turn-taking which underlies all social interaction. Name objects around you as you encounter them. Children come to understand that experience can be described.

8. ***Make sure your kids have plenty of unstructured, unscheduled time to play with peers, with no agenda.*** Encourage your children to have friends visit them at home; find out who your child likes in class, and have her extend an invitation. Take very young ones to the playground.

9. *Polish your own social skills.* Children acquire much of their social disposition, particularly their inclination to approach others, through their parents. Let your kids see you interacting with other people. And regard the family dinner as the training grounds for social behavior. Be polite, friendly, and thoughtful.

10. *Actively model communication skills in your relationship with your child.* Offer positive play suggestions: "I have a fun idea!" Solve family social problems the way your kids need to solve their peer social problems.

☞ Special Note

What to do when a child says, "No one wants to play with me."

- Take it seriously. Be thankful your child trusts you enough to confide this very distressing information.
- Don't try to persuade him that it couldn't possibly be true; that only convinces a child you can't be trusted with such sensitive information.
- Tread gently. Children who are being picked on feel ashamed, and blame themselves for their difficulties; they are reluctant to talk to parents in the first place for fear of being reprimanded. Your child's feelings on this matter are not trivial.
- Engage your child in a conversation about any recent changes in her social environment. Is she being picked on; has a bully joined the class?
- Talk to the teacher to find out what is going on in school. Ask the teacher for advice. But don't stop there.
- Find out from your child what social tasks cause the most trouble, and together explore and rehearse steps your child can take.

Hara Estroff Marano is Editor at Large of Psychology Today and author of "Why Doesn't Anybody Like Me?": A Guide to Raising Socially Confident Kids (Morrow).

Dear Reader

For a long time we have wanted to devote an issue of the Newsletter to the topic of social skills. While we hope our kids can develop their abilities – to be smart, talented, perhaps even gifted – we also fret when they don't seem to have friends, or when they have difficulties in social situations. "Nobody likes me" is a child's complaint which often pierces the heart of a listening parent as if it were an arrow.

I know there are children who sail through the perils of making and keeping friends. I have always thought they must be blessed. Being a high achiever is wonderful (and bestows real bragging rights to parents), but kids can't play with good grades on a rainy afternoon. Perhaps this is a strange statement to come from a woman who spent (mumble) years getting a Ph.D. but I know that it is friends who pull us through tough times, who hold our hands when we hurt, share our joy when we celebrate.

This has been a long-winded way to say how important friends are, and how crucial is the ability to relate to people, and to form relationships. So, we waited until we found just the right author – Hara Marano. Her article will tell you why proficiency in social situations is essential. Even better, she'll get you off to a good start encouraging your child's "people" skills. After you read her analysis of one conversation you'll truly understand why the word "skill" is so appropriate.

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer.

Neala Schwartzberg

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Winter Apples & Pears

Autumn, what a glorious season of the year. Leaves, leaves, everywhere. What I really like is to trample through the leaves, listening to the crunching sounds that they make, and breathing their delicious earthy smell. I feel like a small child when I do that. And, it's very peaceful. Try it with your children. They'll probably like it too.

Autumn is also the season for apples and pears. We are blessed here in New England with different types of apples and pears. To me, this is a great treat. In Brazil, when I was growing up, it was very difficult to find apples. Brazil did not have apple orchards until the late 1940s. Now it has apple and pear orchards in the southern part of the country. But then, the only apple to be found was the Red Delicious, imported from the United States. It was so expensive that the cooks who could afford it prepared it as if it were an ounce of gold – only on very special occasions and for very dear friends.

Let us celebrate this season by preparing a recipe that came from grandmother Maria Campos, my father's mother.

This is a good recipe for adults and children to prepare together. Parents, if you can, take your children to the zoo and show them what a porcupine looks like. Or, show them pictures from library books. If you have an opportunity, take them to an orchard, and let them see and learn about apples. When you go to the supermarket, take them with you and show them how to select the fruits. Choose the apples with even color, firm, and without bruises.

Apples Porcupine From My Grandmother Maria (Macas Porcoespinho Da Minha Avo Maria)

Juice of 1 lemon
¼ cup cold water
6 Golden Delicious apples
½ cup dates, pitted, and chopped finely
½ cup unsweetened grated coconut
1 teaspoon lemon zest, grated
¼ cup untoasted bread crumbs
3 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 to 1½ cups slivered almonds
⅓ cup brown sugar
1½ cups apple cider
Vanilla ice cream

Let us put on our aprons, wash our hands, tie our hair back, and begin.

- Adult: read the recipe aloud. Let the child help you gather the utensils and measure the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 325 F. Cut the lemon into halves.
- Child: Butter a baking pan large enough to hold the apples. Squeeze the lemon juice into a bowl with water. Set aside.
- Adult: Rinse the apples very well. Peel each apple and remove the center with an apple corer, but leave it whole.
- Child: Bathe the apple with the lemon juice water, and place the apple over a rack to drain.
- Child: In a small bowl, combine the dates with the coconut, zest, bread crumbs, 2 tablespoons of melted butter, and cinnamon.
- Adult: Show the child how to stuff the apples by tablespoonfuls. Fill the cavities of the apples with the date mixture. Combine the sugar with the apple cider. Set aside.
- Adult: Make small cuts on the outside of the apples. Show the child how to insert one sliver of almond in each cut. It will resemble a small, round porcupine. The more almonds you place on the outside, the nicer it will look.
- Child: Arrange the apples in the prepared baking dish and pour the cider mixture over them. Brush the apples with the remaining melted butter.
- Adult: Bake the apples (basting them occasionally) for about 30 minutes or until they are tender when tested with a fork. Remove from the oven and let stand.
- Adult and Child: Arrange each apple in individual dessert dish. Scoop a dollop of ice cream over it and serve with the liquid from the baked apples. This dessert may be served hot or cold. Serves 6

Pear Salad Campos Style

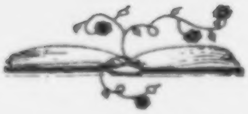
Here is a recipe my father taught me. I named it after him. Later I prepared it for my friends and now I teach it in my classes.

½ cup balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
⅛ teaspoon ground allspice
⅛ teaspoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons walnut oil, or good quality olive oil
Fresh mint leaves, rinsed
1 bunch watercress, stems removed, leaves rinsed
4 Bosc pears, rinsed well
1 bowl with cold water
Juice of 1 lemon

- Adult: Help your child wash and spin dry the watercress leaves. Wrap in a clean towel and refrigerate.
- Child: Measure vinegar, and place in a small pan. Measure, and add the honey, allspice, and cinnamon to the vinegar. Mix well.
- Adult: Place over medium heat, and let the mixture reduce by half.
- Child: Measure 4 cups of cold water into a medium size bowl. Add lemon juice.
- Adult: Peel and core the pears. Place in lemon water to keep them from turning brown. Grate the pears using the largest cut of the grater, or cut into julienn strips. Remove vinegar from heat and cool.
- Child: Combine lime juice and oil with the reduced vinegar. Whisk well.
- Adult: Finely chop the mint leaves and reserve some to garnish the salad.
- Child: Mix chopped mint leaves with the Balsamic dressing. Now mix the dressing with grated pears.
- Adult and Child: Arrange watercress in 8 individual salad plates. Place one portion of the pear salad over the watercress. Garnish with the remaining mint leaves. Serve. This salad goes well with roasted or grilled chicken, or fresh tuna. Serves 8.

Have a delicious Autumn everyone!

Sandy Allen



Library Resources

Helping Children Grow

🕮 ***A Book of Friends*** by Dave Ross; illustrated by Laura Rader; HarperCollins; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $12.95. This is a book about friends. They come in all different sizes, shapes and colors.

🕮 ***Big Dog and Little Dog Making a Mistake*** by Dav Pilkey; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1999; Boardbook $5.95. Big Dog and Little Dog mistake a skunk for a kitty. Perfect for little ones.

🕮 ***Different Just Like Me*** by Lori Mitchell; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $15.95. Everyone is different on the outside, but not so different on the inside. No matter where April goes she sees that people speak different languages, face different challenges, and have different abilities, but she realizes there are things we all have in common.

🕮 ***A Friend for Growl Bear*** by Margot Austin; illustrated by David McPhail; HarperCollins; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. All little Growl Bear can do is growl, so the other animals don't want to play with him. Finally, Old Owl realizes that he's not really growling, he's just too little to talk.

🕮 ***How to Be a Friend*** by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown; Little Brown and Company; Boston, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. This book isn't a story, instead it is a guide to the meaning of friendship and how to become a good friend. It talks about how to join a group of children playing, what *not* to do, how to make up after an argument and more.

🕮 ***How to Lose All Your Friends*** by Nancy Carlson; Puffin Books; New York, 1997; Softcover, $4.99. Do you know how to lose your friends? Well, this book tells you how. Never smile. Never share; hide the cookies you're eating when your friends come over. Whine a lot. Written with engaging humor, the book ends by showing a girl watching other children playing, and sharing.

🕮 ***It's My Birthday!*** by Pat Hutchins; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.00. Billy is having a hard time sharing his birthday presents. When he receives a game that can't be played alone he realizes that playing with others is more fun than playing alone.

🕮 ***Little Bunny's Cool Tool Set*** by Maribeth Boelts; illustrated by Kathy Parkinson; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1997; Hardcover. Little Bunny has saved his money to buy a real set of tools and a tool belt. He proudly brings it to "show and tell" but becomes very upset when the other children want to touch and play with it.

🕮 ***The Loudness of Sam*** by James Proimos; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1999; Hardcover, $13.00. Sam does everything loudly, and his parents never "shhhed" him for it. Now he's going to visit Aunt Tillie. He loves visiting, but no one does anything loudly there, and Sam is always being "shushed", until the last day of his visit. Then, to his delight, Aunt Tillie starts to do everything loudly too.

🕮 ***Manners by Aliki***; Mulberry Books; New York, 1997; Paperback, $4.95. A wonderful book to read with children to help them understand what manners are and why they are important. The often humorous and gentle stories and cartoons are effective without being preachy and are excellent starting points for discussions.

🕮 ***Rabbit Food*** by Susanna Gretz; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Children aren't the only ones who are picky eaters. When Uncle Bunny comes to visit, the children learn that not all bunnies love carrots. Soon the kids are trying to get their uncle to try them. And Uncle Bunny discovers he actually likes carrots.

🕮 ***You're Not My Best Friend Anymore*** by Charlotte Pomerantz; pictures by David Soman; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.99. Molly and Ben are best friends, until they have a fight. They miss each other, but don't know how to patch things up. Their birthdays, which they always celebrated together, become the catalyst to renew their friendship.

🕮 ***Why Do You Love Me?*** by Dr. Laura Schlessinger with Martha Lambert; illustrated by Daniel McFeeley; Cliff Street Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.95. Children often think that they are loved when they are good, and not loved when they are bad. Although it's not true, how is a child to know that if a parent doesn't tell them? Cuddle up and remind your youngster that "... the love in my heart is like the sun in the sky. It is always there, even when you can't see it."

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NEWSLETTER

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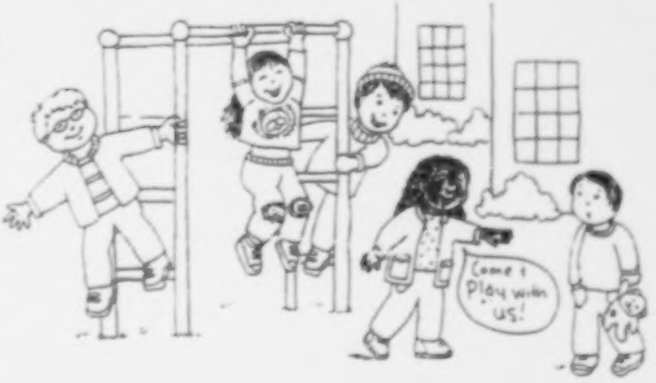
NIÑOS SOCIALMENTE HABILES

Criando niños que hacen amigos


Come ! Play with us!

¿"Qué estabas pensando cuando lo tomaste por primera vez?", le pregunté a mi amiga Diana, una mujer inteligente y sensitiva, un día después que nació Liam, su primer hijo, sabiendo que ese es el momento para que los sueños secretos salgan a la luz. "Sabes", me dijo, sorprendida por su propia respuesta, "no puedo dejar de mirarlo con la esperanza que tenga amigos y que sea popular".

Juzgando por los metros de libros en las librerías sobre la educación de niños, claramente un índice de nuestra ansiedad, reconocemos querer niños más inteligentes, hijos que sepan pensar, niños con más confianza, niños que tengan más autoestima, niños que son felices, orgullosos, responsables, e incluso niños que pueden deshacerse de los rasgos de personalidad Tipo A.

Pero todavía no hemos empezado ha hablar abiertamente sobre querer niños que son populares. Pareciera que hay un tabú de decir esto abiertamente. La vida social generalmente es considerada como trivial. Esto es, indudablemente, el resultado de que realmente no se comprende bien que quiere decir la popularidad.

Para los niños, sin embargo, la popularidad está lejos de ser trivial.

Se trata de ser apreciado por sus pares. Se trata de dar un contexto para el crecimiento mental y sobre el desarrollo de las aptitudes sociales que subyacen las relaciones que perduran a través de una vida. Y resulta que las mismas cualidades que hacen que los niños sean apreciados por sus pares fomentan un mundo más humano y moral.

¿Qué les gusta a los niños en otros niños?

Los niños populares no son solamente amigables, sino que frecuentemente son buenos niños. Cuando los escolares valoran a sus pares y valoran las cualidades que influencian sus opciones, ser útil o servicial sale primero. A los niños les gustan los niños que los ayudan cuando lo necesitan o que tratan de ayudar a alguien que tiene problemas. Quieren como amigo a un niño que demuestra empatía con alguien que ha cometido un error, y que ayuda a otros niños que están teniendo problemas con una tarea.

Ya que son socialmente hábiles, los niños populares no son matones, ni tampoco se dejan amedrentar y, por lo tanto, son menos aptos a elaborar una visión del mundo en la cual infringir dolor está justificado o es necesario. Crecen con un componente moral en su conducta. Pero no es solo que sean bondadosos, o que tengan buena disposición; aprenden muy temprano como manejar los conflictos que son inevitables en las relaciones entre personas.

Incluso en la preescuela, las diferencias en aptitudes sociales pueden ser distintas. Considere un sencillo intercambio que ocurrió en un aula de niños de cuatros años, observado por la sicóloga Jacquelyn Mize de la Universidad de Auburn en Alabama:

Wendy está muy ocupada poniendo la mesa en el rincón de trabajos domésticos cuando se acerca Angela. Mirándola, Wendy dice: "Puedes jugar; tu serás el bebé. Ahora yo tengo que ir a trabajar". "Yo no quiero ser el bebé ? quiero ser la mamá", responde Angela con petulancia.

"Yo sé; tú puedes ser la otra mamá y podemos tomar café en el trabajo", responde Wendy afablemente. Angela parece aceptar esta sugerencia y Wendy busca a través de una montón de ropa para encontrar un par de zapatos de taco alto que Angela se pone. Angela camina tambaleantemente hacia la maquina de escribir de juguete y le pega a las teclas. "Si", dice Wendy con exuberancia, "debemos terminar nuestro trabajo rápidamente".

A pesar de su aparente inconsecuencia, esta pequeña interacción es verdaderamente asombrosa. Se trata de niños muy jóvenes espontáneamente resolviendo el mismo tipo de complejos problemas sociales que los adultos enfrentan constantemente en el trabajo, en el amor, en el hogar, o cuando juegan ? asimilando una nueva persona a una actividad en curso, neutralizando provocaciones, encontrando un terreno común, convirtiendo a un potencial enemigo en aliado, reclutando el apoyo y cooperación de otros, incorporando a otros en la obtención de un objetivo. Además, los niños resuelven los problemas con una facilidad admirable y directa, mientras que lo mantienen un juego.

Wendy es positiva y complaciente, incluso al enfrentar la negatividad de su amiga. Ella ha transformado un episodio potencialmente desagradable en uno positivo, con el uso de un cambio de posición: rechazando una oferta pero simultáneamente proponiendo una nueva, dentro del tema, para crear una aprobación nueva. Ya sean niños o adultos, las personas populares y socialmente adeptas tienen una orientación generalmente positiva y ofrecen sugerencias o ordenes positivas a sus pares. Wendy está "en onda" con la situación y el contexto. La oferta a Angela de un par de tacos altos es pertinente al interés de Angela de ser mamá. Sin embargo, también le interesa a Wendy; la creación de otra madre-trabajadora continúa la línea previa de juego sin interrupción. Los niños socialmente competentes prestan atención, sin embargo son flexibles e incluso creativos. Pueden adaptar lo que están haciendo para acomodarse a otros y tienen la habilidad de considerar las ideas de otros para el juego. Encuentran un papel para otras personas. Además, la conducta de Wendy es sincrónica; ella positivamente combina sus acciones con la conducta de su compañera en este intercambio. Cuando Angela rechazó directamente la primera sugerencia de Wendy de "ser el bebé", Wendy inmediatamente respondió con una alternativa, una que ampliaba los intereses de Angela. Hubo una especie de baile rítmico, una reciprocidad de movimiento. Los niños socialmente hábiles responden y son sensibles a otros.

Wendy es tan hábil que ha creado el éxito de Angela en lo que es probablemente la tarea social más difícil para los niños (y no muy fácil para los adultos) ? de empezar un juego conjunto con otro niño y de poder asimilarse a un grupo. Dada la movilidad de las familias norteamericanas y la frecuencia con que los niños son colocados en nuevas escuelas, esto puede ser una de las habilidades más útiles. Es definitivamente la tarea más importante, porque obtener acceso en el juego de pares es un requisito previo para toda la interacción social subsiguiente.

Pero incluso para los niños populares este es un desafío difícil. En un estudio de niños de segundo y tercer grado, 26% de los esfuerzos de los estudiantes populares fueron rechazados o ignorados por sus compañeros.

Entre niños de jardín infantil, incluso entre los que se conocían bien, más del 50% de los intentos de integrarse fueron rechazados; 54% de las veces, la respuesta a la pregunta ¿"Puedo jugar?" es "No, no eres nuestro amigo". La conclusión obvia es que incluso los mejores intentos de iniciar juegos con otros pueden ser recibidos por un rechazo.

Pero cuando los niños populares hacen intentos de acercarse que son rechazados, ellos no atribuyen el rechazo a su propia incompetencia, que no sean gustados, u otras causas internas. Suponen que el rechazo es el resultado de muchos factores: incompatibilidad, el mal humor de otros, o un malentendido. Ellos desarrollan una actitud de flexibilidad. Y si ellos rechazan los esfuerzos de otros por integrarse, lo hacen de una manera positiva; invariablemente dan una razón o plantean una idea alternativa: "Más tarde puedes traer el camión de bomberos para acá". O "Cuando necesitemos una mamá puedes venir y serla". Una razón que los niños populares son populares es que, incluso en el jardín infantil, son muy hábiles en recopilar información. Tienen buen juicio sobre cuando pueden entrar a jugar en el juego de otros, y pueden esperar hasta que haya espacio para otra persona durante alguna actividad. Ellos "leen" las intenciones de otros bien. Son sensibles a las señales de sus pares que entregan esa información sobre cuales son sus intereses o si quieren que los dejen tranquilos.

Estos niños responden de una manera clara y altamente vinculada a las ofertas de otros a unirse al juego, de una manera que es compatible y pertinente a los que se les está diciendo. Además, se comunican de una manera sencilla; no dicen cosas vergonzosas sobre sus sentimientos sino que ofrecen información concreta sobre la situación en que están. Incluso en el jardín, los niños populares pueden reconocer la expresión de emociones especificas, y lo hacen antes de que le puedan poner una etiqueta verbal a esas emociones. Comprenden que causa las emociones en ellos mismos, y en ultima instancia, en otros. Llegan a comprender que existe una relación entre emociones, situaciones, y los eventos que los emocionan, y cómo esto se traduce en conductas. Como resultado, pueden responder a las necesidades emocionales de otros.

La popularidad es importante

Las relaciones de pares en la infancia no son solamente delicados indicadores del funcionamiento psicológico de los niños; son los mejores indicadores disponibles de como serán los niños. La popularidad es frecuentemente el mejor determinante de la felicidad y del éxito del niño en la escuela. Los niños que no tienen amigos en la escuela generalmente odian ir al colegio. Algunos incluso lo abandonan. Además, la popularidad requiere una inteligencia compleja. Si existiese una duda que la precisa interpretación de la conducta expresiva de las personas ? la comprensión de sus expresiones faciales, las razones y el significado de sus declaraciones verbales- es un acto cognitivo de cuerda floja, que involucra razonamiento complejo, quizás los resultados de estudios de cientos de niños será persuasivo. Incluso descontando diferencias en el coeficiente intelectual, los niños de primaria que obtienen notas altas en la comprensión de expresiones emocionales también obtienen altos puntajes en matemáticas y lectura. Estos mismos niños también son calificados simpáticos por sus pares.

A pesar de su importancia para la infancia hemos quitado demasiado el juego entre niños. Durante las ultimas dos décadas los norteamericanos se han dedicado a apurar a sus niños a crecer. De hecho, para algunos niños, el tiempo "libre" ha sido sacrificado a la competencia desenfrenada, repleta de todo tipo de lecciones y actividades. Esta no es la manera natural en que la infancia se encamina hacia ser adulto. En este ambiente de invernadero, incluso las salas cunas y el jardín han sido intelectualizados y los juegos entre compañeros han sido casi completamente eliminados.

Sin embargo, como Diana, todos los padres quieren realmente criar niños que son queridos por sus pares. La popularidad no es solamente uno de los pocos indicadores tempranos de nuestros éxitos en la empresa a largo plazo de ser padres, es uno de los pocos indicadores tempranos que aseguran que nuestros hijos tengan una buena oportunidad de lograr satisfacción en la vida que eventualmente tendrán que construir.

Recuerde con honestidad sus propios años escolares: la vida social de los niños afecta toda la experiencia de la infancia.

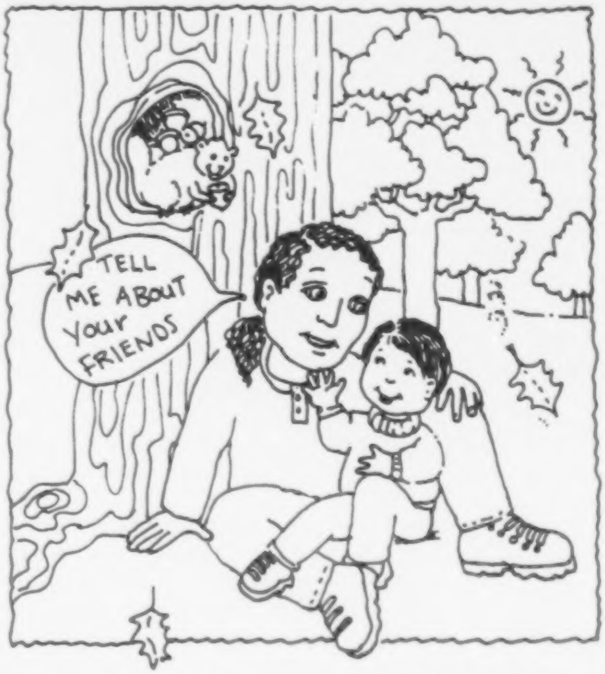
El Contexto Familiar

Muchas personas creen que la popularidad es esencialmente suerte, algo que le pasa a los favorecidos por la fortuna. Pero la popularidad es el resultado de actitudes y habilidades conductuales medibles que pueden ser deliberada y exitosamente cultivadas. Los niños se convierten en seres sociales solo a través de la interacción con otros. Está claro que los niños se desarrollan primero en un contexto de familia. De las tantas cosas que puede hacer un padre para fomentar el desarrollo social de sus hijos, estos son los más importantes:

1. **Enséñele a su hijo como manejar los fracasos sociales.** Los mejores esfuerzos de todos serán rechazados a veces. El rechazo es un hecho de la vida, incluso para los que son populares. Es absolutamente vital reconocer y respetar los sentimientos heridos ("se que te sientes desilusionado") pero es igualmente vital alentar a los niños a que intenten otra vez ("pero estoy seguro que tendrás ora oportunidad mañana"). Los estudios demuestran que cuando están enfrentados con el fracaso, los niños que son apreciados por sus compañeros responden diciendo las siguientes cosas, "Y bueno, puedo jugar la próxima vez?" Ellos convierten una respuesta negativa en una contrapropuesta.

2. **Aliente el sentido de humor.** El humor es la habilidad social más apreciada. El humor funciona incluso en situaciones amenazantes porque anula la negatividad y desconcierta a los matones. No existe una receta para crear el sentido de humor, pero uno puede mirar el lado divertido de las cosas y a la vez ayudar a sus niños hacer la misma cosa. Recorte imágenes divertidas de los diarios y revistas y muéstreselas a sus niños. Cuénteles cosas divertidas que le pasaron durante el trabajo. Cuénteles chistes (limpios) a sus niños, y deje que ellos les cuente chistes a Ud. Asegúrese de reírse, o por lo menos sonría, y recuerde que los niños aprenden tanto de sus fracasos como de sus éxitos.

3. **Responda apoyándoles cuando su hijo necesita ayuda con algo.** No los ignore. Haga comentarios positivos sobre el trabajo o la conducta del niño y no comentarios negativos. Haga sugerencias y evite dar ordenes. Aliente a su hijo y no de ordenes negativas. Comunique afecto y dé explicaciones de como funcionan las cosas.


TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS

4. **Conozca el mundo de su niño.** Pase tiempo observando a su hijo. Pregúntele a su niño, ¿"Cómo te fue hoy día"?, o "Cuéntame que hiciste hoy". ¿"Quien es simpático en tu curso"? ¿"Quien es pesado"? ¿"Quienes son tus amigos"? ¿"Qué tipo de cosas te gusta hacer con tus amigos"? ¿"A quien le gustas en clase"? ¿"Cómo sabes"? "¿A quien crees que le caes mal"? ¿"Cómo sabes"? ¿"Qué tipo de cosas le dice a él o a ella"? ¿"A veces deseas tener más amigos"? Escuche a su niño. Sonríale a su hijo. Toque a su niño. Incline la cabeza como respuesta a la conversación de su niño. Y asegúrese demostrar que Ud. tiene todo el tiempo del mundo para escucharlo. Apague el teléfono, o por lo menos encienda la maquina constestadora de teléfonos. O salgan a caminar al parque. Solamente entonces su hijo se sentirá los suficientemente cómodo para revelar su mundo.

5. **Preste atención a como sus compañeros tratan a sus hijos.** Los niños que son hostigados están frecuentemente atemorizados o

avergonzados de plantear el tema. Los padres deben plantearlo. Sea suave. Pregúntele a ella que le cuente algo bueno que le pasó durante día. Después pídale que le cuente algo malo que pasó.

6. Comparta libremente sus experiencias como niño, especialmente aquellas veces cuando Ud. estaba incierta o preocupada sobre algo ¿"Te conté la vez que mi mejor amiga me tiró piedras y lo mal que me sentí"? Esto hace que sus niños se sientan menos solos con sus problemas de amigos y da un modelo de que hacer y como comportarse.

7. Aliente las habilidades verbales de su hijo. La destreza social reside en la habilidad verbal que a su vez despierta expresividad verbal. Por lo tanto, incluso antes que sus niños les puedan hablar, háblele a sus niños. No comprenderán lo que Ud. dice, pero si adquirirán los ritmos fundamentales de la conversación, y aprenderán que tienen que esperar su turno, algo que subyace toda la interacción social. Nombre los objetos que los rodean a medida que se encuentran con ellos. Los niños llegan a entender que la experiencia puede ser descrita.

8. Asegúrese que sus hijos tengan suficiente tiempo de juego sin estructura u horario para jugar con sus compañeros. Aliente a sus hijos a que los amigos los visiten en su casa; averigüe quien le gusta a su hija en su curso y haga que ella la invite. Lleve a los muy chicos al parque de recreo.

9. Afine sus propias destrezas sociales. Los niños adquieren mucha de su vocación social, especialmente su inclinación a acercarse a otros, a través de sus padres. Permítale a sus niños verlo interactuando con otras personas. Y considere que la cena familiar es un lugar de capacitación para la conducta social. Sea bien educado, amigable, y prudente.

10. Modele actividades d comunicación activamente en la relación con su hijo. Ofrezca sugerencias positivas para el juego: ¡"Tengo una idea entretenida"! Resuelva los problemas sociales familiares de la manera en que sus niños deben resolver sus problemas con sus pares.

Nota Especial:

Qué hacer cuando un niño dice, "Nadie quiere jugar conmigo".

* Tómelo en serio y esté agradecida que su hijo tiene suficiente confianza en Ud. como para confiar esta difícil información.

* No trate de persuadirlo que no puede ser verdad; eso solo convence al niño que Ud. no puede ser confiada con información tan importante.

* Prosiga con cuidado. Los niños que se sienten agredidos se sienten avergonzados y se culpan a si mismos de sus dificultades; son renuentes a conversar con sus padres por temor a ser regañados. Los sentimientos de sus niños en este asunto no son nimios.

* Involucre a su niño en una conversación sobre recientes cambios en su entorno social. ¿Está siendo agredida?; ¿un matón ha ingresado a su curso?

* Hable con la profesora para averiguar que está pasando en la escuela. Pídale consejos a la profesora. Pero no lo deje ahí.

* Pregúntele a su hija cuales tareas sociales le causan más problemas, y conjuntamente exploren y practiquen las medidas que su hija puede adoptar.

Hara Estroff Marano es Editora de Psychology Today y autora de "Why Doesn t Anybody Like Me?": A Guide to Raising Socially Confident Kids (Morrow).

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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CHILDREN AND MUSIC

Helping Kids Make Music

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the earth so high
Like a diamond in the sky
Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are

TWINKLE
TWINKLE
LITTLE
STAR

Do you ever sing this favorite song with your child? If you do, I'm sure that he loves it. He probably wants to sing it over and over again, especially if you show him how to put his hands in the air and make "twinkly" stars with his fingers.

Not only is music fun for children, it helps them develop and practice important abilities. Singing teaches listening, language, and cognitive skills. If it's an action song, it teaches motor skills and develops self-confidence.

But, don't stop with just singing. Other musical experiences are equally important. Playing an instrument, or just listening to music can stimulate learning and memory, and encourage creativity. Exploring language, sound, and rhythm through music enriches one's life. You and your child can clap, snap, sway, stomp, whistle, chant, and dance as you learn and have fun.

Infants

So, when do you begin? Begin in infancy and keep on going.

At this age musical experiences can enhance the bond between you and your baby. Hold your baby in your arms and sing softly, rocking him gently back and forth.

Dramatically recite poems and chants to develop baby's ear for the sounds and rhythm of language.

Sing simple nursery rhymes like "This Little Piggy Went to Market" and do the actions. Touch each toe starting with the big toe as you sing or say the words.

♪ *This little piggy went to market,*
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had roast beef
This little piggy had none
And this little piggy went "wee, wee, wee, wee," all the way home.♪

As you say the last line, run your fingers up your baby's leg and tickle him on the tummy.

One- and Two-Year-Olds

Language skills can be enhanced through musical activities. Songs with counting and actions provide another way for your child to learn information and practice new skills. Sing action songs that give directions like *The Hokey Pokey* and *The Wheels on the Bus*. Do the actions with your child. If you don't know or remember all the words, make up new verses with your youngster.

Jump (or hop) with your youngster as you sing the letters of the ABC song. For a change, instead of singing the regular letters, sing numbers and count as you jump; one, two three, four, etc. Jumping is fun for one- and two-year-olds and it develops their motor skills.

When changing a diaper, sing songs and tap the rhythms on your child's tummy. This activity will help her develop an awareness of rhythm, and it's fun for parent and child, eliciting smiles and giggles.

Tap rhythm sticks (wooden spoons will work) to songs. Sing the song *Pop Goes the Weasel* and wait to hit your sticks

PS 028155

TWANG
bleet
eeek eeek

on the word "Pop." This also develops listening skills, and children love to anticipate when it's time to hit the stick. In fact, sometimes it's so exciting, they simply can't wait and hit the stick constantly.

Three-Year-Olds

Three-year-olds develop listening, language, motor, and cognitive skills through musical activities. Sing the song *Eensy Weensy Spider* and tell your child that whenever she hears the word "spider" she can clap her hands. You can also do many other things when you hear the word "spider." Try stamping your feet, jumping, or crawling like a spider.

Express the rhythm of words with different parts of your body. Try using your child's name, for example Tara, and say the syllables "Ta," "Ra" by shaking your hands, stamping your feet, clapping, nodding your head, and any other movements that you can think of. Do it quickly, then slowly. Take turns with your child suggesting movements.

Sing an opera about everything that you do. Make up melodies and sing the words of daily activities. "Let's take a bath." "Can you throw the ball to me?" Whatever it is, sing it! The more you envelop your child with language, the better reader she will become. Get involved in your child's musical activities. Your enthusiasm is catching.

Four-Year-Olds

Music is a catalyst for movement games which will help develop motor skills and coordination in four-year-olds. The kind of music that you play will influence the kind of moves your child will make.

Try throwing a scarf into the air and see if your child, moving to the music, can catch it before it touches the ground. Ask him to catch the scarf with different parts of his body. Do this together.

Staple some colored tissue paper to a paper towel tube and give it to your child. Let her move it around to the music. This also gives your child an understanding of fast versus slow, depending on the music you play. In fact, select your favorites and both of you can enjoy.

You can teach the concepts of high and low by singing a familiar song with your hands high in the air as you sing in a high voice and your hands low to the ground as you sing in a low voice.

Preschoolers, starting around three or four years of age, are ready for music lessons. Piano and violin are excellent instruments. Buying an inexpensive keyboard is a wonderful way to let your child explore music.

Five-Year-Olds

Five-year-olds love to pretend they are singing into a microphone. Anything can become a microphone – a plastic glass, a paper towel tube, a rhythm stick, even a potato chip can. You can also encourage your child to make up her own melodies and words.

Turn microphone singing into a wonderful presentation that develops self-confidence and provides fun with music. Introduce your child by saying: "Ladies and gentlemen, let's give a big hand-clapping welcome to (child's name) who will sing (let your child pick his favorite song)."

Music is also the perfect vehicle for teaching sequencing. A melody is simply a pattern of musical notes in a special order. If you have a keyboard or other musical instrument, try transposing the melody, playing the pattern on other keys but preserving the rhythm and distance between the notes.

There are also sequencing songs, sometimes called *add on* songs, which encourage your child's memory ability as he keeps the growing list of verses in correct order. Some well-known sequencing songs are:

♪ *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*
♪ *There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea*
♪ *The Twelve Days of Christmas*
♪ *Old Macdonald Had a Farm*
♪ *The Farmer in the Dell*
♪ *I Had a Rooster*
♪ *She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain*

Kazoo games are great fun for five-year-olds. Children are playing an instrument, making music, and feeling very proud of themselves. Play a familiar song on the kazoo and ask your child to play her kazoo on the last word of each line. For example, you play "twinkle, twinkle, little" and your child plays on the word "star." This game is wonderful for developing listening skills.

Another nice kazoo game is to say the following poem.

Time, Time, do you know the time?
Time, Time, play it now!

Your child then blows the kazoo two times if it is two o'clock. You can tell him the number of times to blow. This is excellent practice in counting.

Just in case you need some kazoo practice, this is what you do. Place the larger end in your mouth and purse your lips. Make the sound "too too" into the kazoo. Now try singing a song with the same "too, too" sound.

There are many reasons to teach music besides developing your child's capacity for future learning. Music is non-judgmental. Everyone can be successful in music experiences.

Singing together in a group gives a feeling of closeness and joy. A shared musical experience will remain with you forever. I still recall the pleasure of singing with my entire elementary school each Friday in the auditorium. I also remember all of the words to all of the songs that we sang.

Take your children to music programs and concerts. Organize family song night. Watch musical events on TV. There is an abundance of music videos and CDs for young children. And the best part is that you will benefit from all of these music experiences as much as your child!

Jackie Silberg, also known as "Miss Jackie," lectures extensively, writes music, makes children's recordings, and gives children and family concerts. She is also the author of several books including "I Can't Sing for grownups who can't carry a tune in a paper bag but want to do music with young children" and "125 Brain Games for Babies."

How About A Musical Halloween?

As Halloween gets close, parents begin to consider ways to keep their children safe while giving them a happy holiday. We must think about safe costumes (ones that are not too long, loose, or obstruct a child's vision) and we also deliberate about whether to allow our little ones to trick or treat. A happy solution to the Halloween dilemma can be to plan alternative activities for that special, "scary" night.

Parents can talk to schools, PTAs, or community centers and work together to plan a Halloween party that will provide kids with a safe and fun holiday.

A musical Halloween might just do the trick (and treat). Parents can work together to help kids learn to make coffee can drums, plastic food container and dried bean maracas, and empty tissue box and rubber band guitars. They can even make a kazoo by bending a small piece of waxed paper over a comb and pressing their lips against the paper. As they hum, the paper resonates and makes a buzzing sound. Kids can create these "instruments" as part of the evening's festivities. Then, when everything is ready, the "orchestra" can give an hilarious Halloween concert for the parents at the party.

Children can be asked to create a song or dance that will go with their costume. For example a child dressed as a ghost might opt for a shimmery kind of ballet. A child in a baseball uniform might sing "Take me Out to the Ballgame".

A parent can hum a familiar song while the children make up new Halloween words.

A neighborhood Halloween party may be just what the goblins ordered! Have a scary holiday and lots of fun.

Happy Halloween!

Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour

Special Treats & No Tricks! A Trio of BOOks for Halloween

🕮 ***Child of Faerie*** by Jane Yolen; illustrated by Jane Dyer; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1997; Hardcover, $15.95. "He was a child of faerie folk, A child of sky and air, And she was a child of humankind, Of earth and toil and care." A boy and a girl meet on All Hallow's Eve. They share each other's world for a night and a day, remaining friends forever. A lovely change from the usual Halloween fare.

🕮 ***Halloween*** by Miriam Nerlove; Albert Whitman & Company; Niles, Ill., 1989; Softcover. Bright pictures and simple text about a little girl getting ready for Halloween – picking out and carving a pumpkin, making a costume, and going trick-or-treating with her mother.

🕮 ***Trick-or-Treat!*** by Ann Dixon; illustrated by Larry Di Fiori; Scholastic Cartwheel Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $2.99. A book of addition and subtraction as children join together to go trick-or-treating and gradually are frightened away by a friendly ghost. The text emphasizes the sounds of language through the use of rhyme: "Two monster feet tramping, stamping up the street."

Dear Reader

I love music. My house is filled with sounds of Tina Turner, and Yanni. I dance to the Gipsy Kings, bake to beat of Bob Seger, and drive down the road with Garth. I'm even learning to appreciate classical music and the stirring sounds of Beethoven. Music can reflect, or change my mood. It can calm me when I'm stressed, and energize me when I'm down.

Yet, I am totally unable to carry a tune. My mathematical ability is limited and I cannot manipulate shapes in my mind. Ask me how an object would appear from a different angle and I'll simply look at you blankly.

Why do I bring up my love of music and my lack of mathematical and spatial skills? Much has been made in the media of a link between music and math (see pg. 4; this issue), a connection which isn't really there. But that doesn't change my certainty about the importance of music. Music lessons? Yes. Family song night? Absolutely. Or any of the wonderful musical suggestions by Jackie Silberg in her article on bringing music into children's lives.

Music forges bonds between us, gets us up and moving. It may change the wiring of our brains, but the real importance of music is that it enriches our lives.

Neala Schwartzberg

♪ ♪ the music - math (and Mozart) controversy ♪ ♪

Everyone seems to be talking about the link between music and math ability. It would seem, on the surface, that playing the "right" kind of music would turn your child into a mathematical genius. Or at least help him do better in math. We can even buy music specifically chosen to do this.

Exposure to music, as with all other kinds of stimulation, affects baby's developing brain. Babies need to hear language in order to develop the ability to speak that language. Babies need to be exposed to sizes, shapes, angles, the full array of visual experiences if they are to become able to see them. So, it shouldn't surprise us that exposure to music also affects babies. But this is very different from the association between Mozart and math, or perhaps more accurately, classical music and math/spatial ability. What does the research actually show?

Early research[1] found that listening to Mozart encouraged a specific type of spatial reasoning ability for the brief time-frame of the research study. However, not everyone who looked for that effect found it[23]. It seemed the measure of spatial ability was crucial. Look at another outcome and...nothing.

What was going on here? Bruce Rideout and his colleagues began to investigate this effect. They used paper-folding and cutting items requiring the participants to be able to manipulate shapes in their minds. Rideout and Taylor[4] found that those who listened to a selection by Mozart did slightly better on the tasks than those who did a progressive relaxation exercise. But they noted that the effect was both small and varied by individual. Eleven of the 32 subjects showed worse performance following the music.

But the researchers also wanted to know if it had to be classical music, so they[5] selected a piece by the New Age composer Yanni. The results? The students did reliably better after listening to either form of music; Mozart and Yanni appeared to be equally effective. But they also found that practice alone also improved performance.

If the effects are fleeting and not consistently demonstrated, perhaps there was a way to "beef" them up?

Recently, Francine Rauscher and her associates[6] gave preschool children several months of either private piano keyboard lessons, computer lessons, singing, or no lessons at all. Children who had instruction in the piano keyboard did better on a particular type of task called spatial-temporal reasoning. This involved asking the children to arrange the pieces of a puzzle into a meaningful picture. This improvement lasted one day, which was the time span used in the study. The researchers suggest that music training may change the wiring of the brain to enhance children's ability to do this particular kind of task.

The idea that musical training can improve any aspect of spatial ability, the ability to understand the way objects and shapes can be manipulated in our mind, is fascinating. But it is a far cry from showing that music can improve mathematical ability. So Graziano, Peterson, and Shaw[7] studied the effect of a video-game type software program designed to teach fractions and proportional math. Not surprising, this game enhanced children's ability. What about the music part? For some children, experience with the math software was combined with keyboard lessons. For others it was combined with language and reading software. Then, the researchers looked to see if keyboard training enhanced the children's ability on spatial tasks. And, it did.

The researchers suggest that listening to certain kinds of music appears to prime certain parts of the brain involved with auditory and visual thinking. This, too, is a fascinating idea. But it is very different from asserting that listening to Mozart, classical music, or any other kind of music enhances mathematical ability.

What about the bottom line question? Does just listening to certain kinds of music enhance children's mathematical ability? That's what the hype may suggest, but that's not what researchers found. If you want your child to do well in math, provide relevant math experiences. But if you want your child to be well-rounded, to enjoy and appreciate the sounds and patterns of music, make your home a musical household. The benefits are real, but they aren't measured in numerical achievement.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Ph.D.

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Library Resources

Music & Rhymes

📖 ***A-Hunting We Will Go!*** by Steven Kellogg; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. The tune and original lyrics are in the front of this joyous romp, but the fun is in the made-up whimsically illustrated versions. It begins with children wide awake and reluctant to go to bed, and ends with a big hug.

📖 ***Knock at the Door and Other Baby Action Rhymes***; Kay Chorao; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover $15.99. Diagrams show the motions to accompany the text with delightful illustrations to old favorites and new action rhymes. Fun to play with baby.

📖 ***Marc Brown's Favorite Finger Rhymes***; Marc Brown; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1998; Board book, $7.99. Children's rhymes complete with hand and finger motions. Sturdy format is perfect for little ones.

📖 ***Marc Brown's Favorite Hand Rhymes***; Marc Brown; Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1999; Board book, $7.99. A continuation of Brown's previous book. Lively pictures and sturdy format make it fun for everyone.

📖 ***Playtime Rhymes***; illustrated by Priscilla Lamont; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $12.95. Even more rhymes for parents and children with photographs depicting hand and finger motions.

CDs and Cassettes

= ***By the Light of the Moon: Campfire songs and cowboy tunes***; by Charlie Daniels, Sony Music Entertainment, Sony Wonder; New York, 1997. Cowboy music sung by country music star Charlie Daniels, with a bit of lore and history of the west. These old favorites (e.g. *John Henry, Back in the Saddle Again*) and new songs will have the family singing along.

= ***Songs from a Parent to a Child***; Art Garfunkel; Sony Music Entertainment, Sony Wonder; New York, 1997. Lullabies to gently rock your baby to sleep, and music to hold your child and dance around the room, sung by Art Garfunkle.

= ***Listen to the Storyteller: A trio of musical tales from around the world***; Sony Classical; Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. Three stories for children. Each story has its own stirring style of voice and music. It's a wonderful way to show children that music not only sets the mood but also provides us with another way to experience a story. Parents of very young children should be aware that in the second story, one of the three young boys disregards the advice of his friends, turns into a snake and never returns to his village. The other two stories have the traditional happy ending.

Animal Books

What would children's books be without animals? They stand in for humans, add humor, and provide important 'life' lessons. Sometimes, animal books even talk about what it's like to be an animal.

📖 ***Animals Brightly Colored*** by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1998; Softcover, $6.95. Another of the "guess the animal" type of book with colorful illustrations and interesting facts about wildlife ranging from cardinals to caterpillars.

📖 **Bearskin** by Howard Pyle; illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $16.00. An infant boy is abandoned by his father and found by a mother bear. Fed on her milk, he becomes the strongest man in the land. Filled with romance, bravery, and memorable characters.

📖 ***Big Little Otter and Big Little Lion*** by Lillian Hoban; HarperFestival; New York, 1997; Board book $5.95. Little Otter and Little Lion aren't babies anymore, and they want to do all the things Mama does. Sweet and charming for Big Little children.

📖 ***Biscuit*** by Alyssa Satin Capucilli; pictures by Pat Schories; Harper Trophy; New York, 1997; Softcover, $3.75. It's time for Biscuit to go to bed, but just like any human child, he's not quite ready. One of the "I Can Read" series of books.

📖 ***A Dog Named Sam*** by Janice Boland; pictures by G. Brian Karas; Puffin Books; New York, 1998. Three short stories about Sam, a wonderful dog who has a knack for mischief. One of Puffin's easy-to-read books, children will enjoy this book on their own, or cuddled up with a parent.

📖 ***If Dinosaurs Came to Town*** by Dom Mansell; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1998; Softcover, $5.95. For every child who thinks dinosaurs are cool, this book provides information with fun and whimsy. The pictures add to the enjoyment with Eryops snoozing in the bathtub and Styracosaurus charging a security van to frighten it away.

📖 ***In the Ocean*** by Neecy Twinem; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1998. One of the series of Animal Clues board books this book provides a series of clues to help the young child guess who lives in the ocean. A good book to use to begin a discussion of sea mammals.

📖 ***Lift-The-Flap Puppy*** by Moira Kemp; Lodestar Books; New York, 1998; Board book $4.99. Mama looks for the puppy all over the house, until they both end up asleep under the bed.

📖 ***The Littlest Duckling*** by Gail Herman; illustrated by Ann Schweninger; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.99. Momma duck and all her little ducklings go off to the pond, but the littlest duckling has an adventure on the way home. A sweet story with colorful pictures.

📖 ***Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's Won't-Take-a-Bath Cure*** and ***Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's Won't-Pick-Up-Toys Cure*** by Betty MacDonald; illustrated by Bruce Whatley; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1997; Hardcover, $12.95 each. Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle to the rescue. In the first book Patsy Brown won't take her bath until Mrs. Piggle-Wiggles helps her learn to do things she doesn't want to do. Then, Hubert Prentiss doesn't want to pick up his toys so Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle let's them pile up until he can't get out of his own room.

THE HEALTH CORNER

Injuries & Impulsive Children

Are your children always injuring themselves? Are trips to the emergency room a standard part of your life? If so, it could be a child's temperament and personality. Toddlers and preschoolers who are impulsive and enjoy new and unfamiliar activities injure themselves more than youngsters who don't have these traits, according to the results of a longitudinal study reported in the May issue of *Child Development*.

David Schwebel, M.A. of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and colleague Jodie Plumert, Ph.D. looked at children at three points in time: toddlers; preschoolers; and school-agers. At six, researchers also tested the children's skill at estimating their own physical abilities – e.g. whether they could reach a toy off a shelf beyond their grasp by standing on their tiptoes. Mothers also provided a history of their children's injuries.

What did they find?

Preschoolers and toddlers who were extroverted (who enjoyed new and unfamiliar activities) and who are also impulsive in these situations (who approach dangerous situations without plan or direction) overestimated their physical abilities at age 6. Their perception of what they could do was greater than what they could actually accomplish. Further, their mothers reported more injuries requiring medical attention. The picture was different for children who were rather inhibited – they tended to underestimate their physical abilities and have fewer injuries.

Don't think that just because you're the parent of a little girl that you're safe. The researchers found that gender didn't make a difference.

Every day children face situations in which they make judgements about their physical abilities and limitations. Can they successfully climb up the bars, and if they jump down will they land safely? Can they walk across a narrow bridge without falling? Can they balance themselves while turning a sharp corner on a bike? Is the slope too steep for their in-line skates or skate board? When children are eager to try tricks, climb new places, try new moves, they can put themselves at risk. If they overestimate their abilities, ("Hey, that looks like fun, let's try it.") they can injure themselves.

Highly active kids who eagerly approach new situations may also have unintentional injuries because they seek out novel situations, and see possibilities for exciting adventures where other children may not. Those without the ability to plan ahead and see the possible consequences of their actions could be injured.

While it may seen better to have a more timid child, children who underestimate their physical abilities may have other problems. They won't be jumping off the top of the slide, but they may also be more physically timid and unable to keep up with their peers. They may be afraid to learn to skate, or ride a bike. Follow the leader will not be a game of choice. These children may come to feel socially isolated, develop lower self-esteem and end up being taunted by peers. Underestimating their physical abilities may stop them from enjoying physical activities. With less opportunity to practice physical skills they may have less muscle development and poorer balance making it even less likely they'll become physically active.

What's a parent to do with adventurous, come-on-let's-try-it youngsters?

- **Teach them about safe behavior.** Teach them not to swing too high on the swings. When in new situations, help them see potential dangers – why they shouldn't jump from rowboat to rowboat, climb out onto slender branches, dart in front of a car to go after a ball.
- **Insist they follow safety procedures** - wear a bike helmet, knee and elbow pads for skateboarding or in-line skating.
- **Childproof your house.** These are the children who'll try to swing from the drapes, or climb down the stairs before they're ready and able.
- **Supervise your youngsters well.** If there is mischief to be gotten into, they'll surely find it.

What about the physically timid children?

You don't want to change your youngster into a budding dare-devil, but there are some things you can do to encourage physical skills.

Go to the playground at off times and work with your child on the equipment. Be the safety net while your daughter climbs the bars or as your son climbs up the stairs and down the slide.

Be an active family. Play ball, run, ride bicycles together. Play catch in the yard or at the park.

Sign your youngster up for classes at the local community center or Police Athletic League.

Support your children's skills in other areas. Children are usually most impressed by physical ability and a youngster who lags in this area can experience peer problems. Help your youngsters feel good about themselves in other ways for their other abilities.

NORTH SHORE
CHILD & FAMILY
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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER
NEWSLETTER
Pp Parent and preschooler
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute
Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award
En Español
Volume 14, Number 9
An International Resource for Professionals and Parents
October 1999

LOS NIÑOS Y LA MUSICA

Ayudando a los niños hacer música

Centellea, centellea,
pequeña estrella
Cómo me pregunto qué eres
Sobre la tierra tan alta
Como un diamante en el
cielo
Centellea, centellea,
pequeña estrella
Cómo me pregunto qué
eres.

¿Alguna vez Ud. canta esta canción favorita con su niño? Si es así, estoy segura que le encanta. Seguramente quiere cantarla constantemente, especialmente si Ud. le muestra como levantar las manos y hacer estrellitas "centelleantes" con los dedos. La música no solo es entretenida para los niños; les ayuda a desarrollar y practicar importantes habilidades. El canto enseña a escuchar y desarrolla habilidades lingüísticas y cognitivas. Si es una canción de acción, enseña habilidades motor y desarrolla confianza en si mismo.

Pero no se quede con solo cantar. Otras experiencias musicales son igualmente importantes. Jugar, o solamente escuchar música puede estimular el aprendizaje y la memoria, y fomentar la creatividad. La exploración del lenguaje, sonido, y ritmo a través de la música enriquece nuestras vidas. Ud. y su niño pueden aplaudir, silbar, chasquear los dedos, moverse, cantar y bailar mientras aprenden y lo pasan bien.

BEBES

¿Bien, y entonces cuando se empieza? Empiece durante la infancia y continúe. A esta edad las experiencias musicales pueden aumentar el vínculo entre. Ud. y su bebé. Tome a su niño en los brazos y cántele suavemente, meciéndolo tranquilamente. Declámele poemas y canciones para desarrollar el oído del niño a lossonidos y el ritmo del lenguaje. Cante canciones de cuna sencillas como "Este Cerdito fue al Mercado" y haga todas las acciones. Toque cada dedito empezando con el dedo gordo a medida que canta o recita las palabras.

TWINKLE
TWINKLE
LITTLE
STAR

Este cerdito fue al mercado.
Este cerdito se quedo en casa
Este cerdito comió carne
Este cerdito no comió nada
Y este cerdito dijo "gũi, gũi,
gũi, gũi", durante todo el
camino a casa.

A medida que dice la ultima línea, pase sus dedos por la pierna de su bebé y hágale cosquillas en el estomago.

NIÑOS DE UNO Y DE DOS AÑOS

Las habilidades lingüísticas pueden ser mejoradas a través de actividades musicales. Las canciones con acción y que requieren contar ofrecen otra manera para que su niño aprenda información y practique nuevas habilidades. Cante canciones con acción que dan instrucciones como "The Hoke Pokey" y "The Wheels on the Bus". Haga las acciones con su niño. Si Ud. no sabe o no recuerda la letra, invente nuevos versos con su hijo. Salte con su retoño a medida que canta las letras de la canción del ABC. Para cambiar un poco, en vez de cantar las letras normales, cante números y cuente a medida que salta: uno, dos tres, cuatro, etc. Saltar es entretenido para los niños de uno o dos años y desarrolla habilidades motor.

Cuando cambie los pañales, cante canciones y toque los ritmos en el estomago de su niño. Esta actividad la ayudara a desarrollar conciencia del ritmo, y es entretenido para padre e hijo, y produce sonrisas y risitas.

Toque el ritmo de la canción con palos (las cucharas de madera sirven). Cante la canción "Pop Goes the Weasel" y espere hasta que llegue la palabra "Pop" para usar los palos. Esto también desarrolla habilidades de oír, y a los niños les encanta anticipar cuando es el momento de tocar con el palo. De hecho, a veces es tan entretenido, que simplemente no se pueden aguantar y tocan el palo constantemente.

NIÑOS DE TRES AÑOS

Los niños de tres años desarrollan habilidades de oír, lingüísticas, motrices y cognitivas a través de las actividades musicales. Cante la canción "La Cucaracha" y dígale a su niño que cuando escuche la palabras cucaracha puede aplaudir. Ud. también puede hacer muchas otras cosas cuando escucha la palabra cucaracha. Intente un zapateo, saltar, o arrástrese como una cucaracha.

Exprese el ritmo de las palabras con distintas partes de su cuerpo. Trate de usar el nombre su hijo, por ejemplo Tomás, y diga las sílabas "To" "Más" moviendo las manos, zapateando, aplaudiendo, moviendo la cabeza, y cualquier otro movimiento que se le ocurra. Hágalo rápido y lento. Cambie de papel y deje que su hijo sugiera movimientos.

Cante una opera sobre todo lo que hace. Invente melodías y cante la letra de actividades cotidianas. "Bañémonos". "¿Me puedes tirar la pelota?" Lo que sea, ¡cantelo! Entre más involucra a su niño con el lenguaje, se convertirá en mejor lector .Involúcrese en las actividades musicales de

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sus hijos. Su entusiasmo es contagioso.

NIÑOS DE CUATRO AÑOS

La música es un catalizador para los juegos de movimiento que ayudaran a desarrollar las habilidades motor y la coordinación en los niños de cuatro años. El tipo de música que Ud. toque influenciara el tipo de movimientos que hará su niño.

Intente tirar un pañuelo al aire y vea si su niño, moviéndose con la música, lo puede agarrar antes que toque el suelo. Pídale que agarre el pañuelo con distintas partes de su cuerpo. Hagan esto juntos.

Con un corchete pegue papel tisú a un tubo de toallas de papel y déselo a su hija. Déjela que lo mueva al ritmo de la música. Esto también le da a su hija una comprensión de rápido y de lento, dependiendo de la música que toque. De hecho seleccione su música favorita y los dos la pueden gozar. Ud. puede enseñarle los conceptos de alto y bajo cantando una canción conocida con las manos en alto a medida que Ud. canta con una voz aguda y con las manos bajas casi tocando el suelo a medida que canta en voz profunda.

Los preescolares empezando alrededor de los tres o cuatro años, están listos para las lecciones de música. El piano y el violín son excelentes instrumentos. La compra de un órgano electrónico es una manera maravillosa para que su niño explore la música.

NIÑOS DE CINCO AÑOS

A los niños de cinco les encanta pretender que están cantando con un micrófono. Cualquier cosa puede convertirse en micrófono ? un vaso de plástico, un tubo de toallas de papel, un palo, incluso un tarro de papas fritas. Ud. también puede alentar a su hijo a inventar sus propias melodías y letras. Convierta cantar con micrófono en una experiencia maravillosa que desarrolla confianza en si mismo y hace la música entretenida. Presente a su hija diciendo: "Damas y caballeros, un gran aplauso para (nombre de su hija) que cantará (deje que su hija escoja su canción favorita)".

La música también es el vehículo perfecto para enseñar secuencias. Una melodía es simplemente un patrón de notas en un orden especial. Si Ud. tiene un órgano electrónico u otro instrumento musical, intente transponer la melodía, tocando la secuencia en otros tonos pero preservando el ritmo y distancia entre las notas.

También hay canciones de secuencias, que se llaman canciones "con agregado", que alientan la habilidad de la memoria de su hija a medida que mantiene la creciente lista de versos en orden. Algunas canciones "con agregado" muy conocidas son:

"I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly"

"There s a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea"

"The Twelve Days of Christmas"

"Old Macdonald had a Farm"

"The Farmer in the Dell"

"I Had a Rooster"

"She'll Be Coming' Round the Mountain

Los juegos de kazoo (una especie de chicharra) son muy entretenidos para los niños. Los niños están tocando un instrumento, haciendo música y sintiéndose muy orgullosos. Toque una canción conocida en el kazoo y dígale a su hija que toque el kazoo en la ultima palabra de cada línea. Por ejemplo, Ud. toca centellea, centellea, pequeña y su hija toca con la palabra estrellita. Este juego es maravilloso para desarrollar las habilidades de oír.

Otro juego bonito de kazoo es recitar el siguiente poema.
"Hora, Hora, ¿sabes la hora?
"Hora, Hora, ¡tócalo ahora!

Su hija toca el kazoo dos veces si son las dos. Ud. le puede decir el número de veces que puede tocar. Esta es excelente práctica para contar.

En caso que Ud. necesite práctica en el kazoo, esto es lo que tiene que hacer. Ponga la parte más grande en su boca y frunza los labios. Haga el sonido "tu tu" en el kazoo. Ahora trate de cantar una canción con el mismo sonido "tu tu".

Existen muchas razones para enseñar música fuera de para desarrollar la capacidad del niño para aprender en el futuro. La música no emite juicios. Todos pueden tener éxito en las experiencias musicales.

Cantar juntos en un grupo da la sensación de intimidad y alegría. Una experiencia musical compartida se queda con uno para siempre. Yo todavía recuerdo el placer de cantar con toda mi escuela primaria todos los viernes en el auditorio. También recuerdo la letra de todas las canciones que cantamos.

Lleve a sus niños a programas y conciertos musicales. Organice una noche familiar para cantar. Mire eventos musicales en la televisión. Hay muchos videos musicales y CDs para niños. Y la mejor parte es que Ud. se beneficiara de todas estas experiencias musicales tanto como sus hijos.

TWANG
bleet
eeek eeek

Jackie Silberg, también conocida como "Miss Jackie", da muchas conferencias, escribe música, hace grabaciones para los niños, y da conciertos para niños y familias. También es autora de varios libros incluyendo "I Can't Sing for Grownups who can't Carry a Tune in a Paper Bag but Want to do Music With Young Children" y "125 Brain Games for Babies".

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INCLUSION

Doing Our Best for All Children

Barbara had so much fun and made so many new friends at the local play program she and her one-year-old daughter attended that she thought it would be great to share the experience with her sister-in-law, Janet. She convinced Janet to join the program with her daughter, Tracy, who is almost two and has cerebral palsy.

At the first class Tracy was very excited, and when she's excited she yells. Tracy's yelling upset one of the other parents who complained to the director that she didn't want to be in the same class with Tracy because the yelling was disturbing to her son, Jason.

The director called Janet to explain the situation. At first, Janet was very upset and didn't want to attend the program any more, but Barbara and the director worked together on a solution. They decided to experiment by arriving at the class a few minutes before the other children and parents to get Tracy acclimated and relaxed. When the other parents and children arrived Tracy still made noise, but not as loudly. She was able to focus on the other children and the activities. It was a difficult transition made smoother with support and understanding. Tracy and her mom were included in the playgroup and everyone benefited.

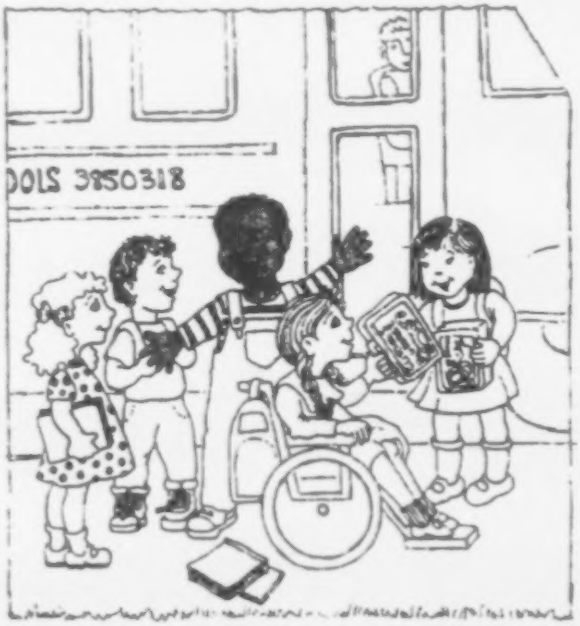
Scenarios like this are being played out more frequently as inclusion becomes more common. Parents, educators, and concerned individuals within communities agree that inclusion of children with disabilities into preschool is important. But it is controversial as well.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is an ideal that mirrors a question we have been asking for millennia: "How do we live with one another?" Inclusion is about learning to live with one another -- including those with special needs and limitations. Preschool, parent and child groups, and daycare centers are the earliest (and best) places to start the inclusionary process, a process that will continue into higher grades and into the community at large.

Inclusion is not a single event but rather the process of educating children with disabilities in their neighborhood school; the same school they would normally attend if they did not have a disability. It refers to the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent possible, as equal participants in a society in which all children are given the same opportunities to reach their potential.

"Full" inclusion educates children with special needs within the general education classroom, while providing any necessary supports and accommodation. "Partial" inclusion (sometimes called "mainstreaming") refers to the practice of educating students with special needs in the general education



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classrooms for some portion of their day, while they spend the other portion of the day receiving instruction in a special education classroom or resource room.

The History of Inclusion

The current trend towards inclusion actually began with the civil rights movement. In 1954, Brown vs. Board of Education marked the end of the idea that we can provide separate but equal education. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 became the most important federal law affecting special education; it mandated a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for children and youth ages five to twenty-one with disabilities. In 1986, Public Law-99 (part B) extended the school's responsibility to include the education of children ages three to five, and (part H) established programs for infants and toddlers with special needs.

These basic provisions were reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990 which also replaced the term 'handicapped' with 'disability'. Currently, EHA/IDEA entitles all students with disabilities to an education in the "least restrictive environment" and "to the maximum extent appropriate." This means that education should take place in natural environments – including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate – while receiving the support necessary to meet their individual needs.

The implementation of this ideal has become a challenge for all concerned and sometimes elicits strong feelings. Why does the welcoming of people with disabilities sometimes meet with intense reactions?

Resource Information on Disabilities

✦ National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
NICHCY is a clearinghouse that provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues with a special focus on children and youth.
NICHCY
P O Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013-1492
1 800 695-0285
1 202 884-8200
email: nichcy@aed.org
website: www.nichcy.org

✦ AskERIC Service
If you have email or can access the Internet you can use AskERIC for education-related questions. You'll receive an email response in about two days.
email: askeric@askeric.org
website: www.askeric.org

✦ National Parent Information Network (NPIN)
The National Parent Information Network contains short articles, discussion groups on early childhood topics, and more.
website: npin.org

Inclusion is not simply about placing a child with special needs in a regular classroom or playgroup. Inclusion is about how we deal with diversity in our society and how we deal with, or avoid dealing with, our own differences, weaknesses, and fears.

What are the Potential Advantages of Inclusion?

An often-overlooked outcome of inclusion is the change in attitudes of teachers, parents, as well as the children without special needs. Compassion and sensitivity grow when we face our fears and concerns and help others. Parents report that typically developing children enrolled in integrated settings display less prejudice, fewer stereotypes, and are more responsive and helpful to others. Teachers report that the children without disabilities become more aware of the needs of others when they are enrolled in a class which includes a child with a disability. Inclusive education benefits typically developing children by developing respect for human diversity.

We can also learn gratitude for all we have, compassion for the struggle of others, and the tenacity and triumph of the human spirit when we watch a child who has special needs struggle and succeed at his or her goals.

What better way to learn these lessons than by living them with children and parents who are in the process of discovering everyday that what appears to be a tragedy can be overcome bringing success and satisfaction.

Josine Mash, the mother of nine-year-old Brandon, who has autism, explains this dichotomy in an article, *Could We Truly Appreciate the Sun if it Weren't for the Rain?*, in her son's school newsletter. Although she talks about "...the pain of not being able to converse with your own child, the person you most cherish..." she focuses on his struggle to develop. "His speech emerged slowly, in stages, across a span of years... Like a visitor to a strange land; he struggles to make sense of our language. A dark yellow color is 'navy yellow' and a jar of white paste is 'vanilla'... ." She also talks about how much she has learned by being a part of this process. "Could we truly appreciate the sun if it weren't for the rain? I once saw a magnificent rainbow arching across the ocean. Every time I hear my son's voice I feel like I'm seeing that rainbow, holding its promise in my hand."

Inclusion also brings the special education teacher and other professionals into the regular class to help.

Early detection of developing problems can be addressed before they cause behavior problems or learning difficulties.

Despite some concern that being in an integrated class would somehow slow the development of children without disabilities, it has been found that normally developing children enrolled in integrated programs make developmental gains at least equivalent to those made by their peers in nonintegrated programs.

Compassion and sensitivity grow when we face our fears and concerns and help others.

Why? The educational strategies for inclusion are the same strategies used for all children: to create an environment rich in diversity, learning, support and respect for all children and their individual needs, allowing every child to reach his or her potential.

Of course, there are real benefits for the children with special needs. Most agree that developing the social skills of young children is a primary goal– and that is often done through playing and developing friendships. Where do we find many of our first friends? Family, neighborhood, school, daycare centers, preschools, and playgroups. But children with special needs often see only family and some paid professionals. What they lack are the normal interactions with other children. "One ordinary garden variety kid-friend can achieve all sorts of miracles in learning that a classroom of special educators, speech therapists, and social workers cannot seem to manage," writes Debra Kendrick, a journalist who is visually impaired (Cincinnati Enquirer, March 8, 1991).

Where does this bring us? Back to Tracy and the others who form friendships that can last into their school years, and maybe longer.

What are the Potential Disadvantages?

Research confirms the social benefits of inclusion. However, inclusion requires planned social skills interventions, such as helping children learn to share, make friends, and encourage play, between children with and without disabilities. Special equipment and changes in the physical environment may be necessary to support these interventions. Arranging the room into a variety of interest centers encourages small groups of two to three children to play together. Adaptive equipment may also be needed to promote play or even make play possible. A child who is usually in a wheelchair may need a stander in order to participate on the same physical level as the other children.

Full inclusion might be one way to satisfy the law, but not everyone is in agreement about its benefits. Many fear that full inclusion would eliminate all special placements, including such services as speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. They fear the reduction of specialized schools for those who can not benefit from inclusion into regular classrooms. Parents of special needs children are concerned that full inclusion would harm their children's educational development. Some children with disabilities will not thrive in a regular classroom. They may need specialized services that are unavailable in a regular educational setting.

Clearly, educational decisions need to be made on a case by case basis with awareness of the many ways to receive needed services. The best choice is the one which is best for each individual child. Inclusion into typical classrooms should not be a blanket policy for all children with disabilities but must be an option available. Extreme caution must be exercised so that full inclusion does not result in social isolation, poor performance, or a setting in which services are unavailable or not appropriate for the family.

Full Inclusion Making It Work For Everyone

In order to be successful, the family and the child with special needs will need additional support personnel when in a regular education or recreational program. Staffing, class size, number of children with disabilities, and the nature and quality of a child's disability are important factors. Ideally the number of children with special needs in a classroom should approach the ratio in society, where approximately one out of fifteen American children has a disability. This increases the opportunity for children to get to know and appreciate one another without overwhelming the capacity of the teachers and students.

Staff development, staff skill, and quality programming are key ingredients. Attitudes about inclusion, access to specialists, and collaborative planning and curriculum are additional factors influencing the success of inclusion. Teachers need special training, and children need special preparation in order to make these programs work.

Inclusion is a value, much like the commitment to racial or gender equality. It may not always be easy. It may require change and accommodation, but the process of inclusion and the encouragement of each individual child allows each person to develop his or her talents and strengths. It also provides opportunities for all of us to develop the much desired qualities of compassion, empathy, and helpfulness. It can teach us, and our children that the greater the diversity the richer our capacity to create a more humane and respectful society.

Susan Astor, MS Special Education, is an early childhood special educator and President of Eduplay Corp., which operates Playorena, and Music and More. Ms. Astor is also coauthor of Gymboree: Giving your child physical, mental, and social confidence.

Inclusion: It isn't always the answer.

Based on an interview with Barbara Whiteside, Ph.D.

Dr. Whiteside is the Supervisor of Psychological Services at St. Charles Educational and Therapeutic Center - a program for children from birth through 5 years of age with special needs. The Center is located in Pt. Jefferson on Long Island, New York.

The children who attend the program have documented deficits of such significance that they require an intensive, highly structured learning environment with appropriate therapies. "Their needs can not be adequately met within the typically functioning preschool or day care settings," says Dr. Whiteside.

"The goal of inclusion is always to keep children with special needs in the least restrictive environment, and to work towards placing them in the most normal setting possible," says Dr. Whiteside, "ideally, going to their local school where all their peers go."

However, a typical classroom is not always the best place for these children. "Inclusion isn't appropriate for every child with special needs, or the other children in the inclusion classroom."

When the needs of the children overwhelm the capacity of the teachers, the other children, and the ability of the school to provide effective services, Dr. Whiteside suggests that everyone may be better served by placing children in special programs which have intensive services and a much smaller ratio of staff to children.

Every state has its own regulations. In New York State, for example, regulations require that every classroom of special needs children have one certified special education teacher and a state-mandated appropriate number of teacher assistants and aides. These professionals must have special and often intensive training in dealing with children who have deficits and difficulties. "Typical day care teachers may have some training, but it is unlikely they will have the same level of training," notes Dr. Whiteside.

Far from being a way to warehouse these youngsters, "the whole point of these programs is to minimize the services they will need in the future by providing intensive and appropriate intervention at an early age. These children then gain the skills they need to be placed in a less restrictive setting down the road," says Dr. Whiteside.

Kathy was identified at about three years of age as having a speech and language deficit so severe that it was affecting her cognitive, social, and emotional development. She was having difficulty learning concepts. She couldn't understand size, or color. Although Kathy had normal intelligence, her language delay was stopping her from learning these age-appropriate concepts. It also hampered her ability to make friends with the other children. "She wasn't joining in, she didn't have the language to do imaginative or pretend play like the other children, so she sat there all alone," explains Dr. Whiteside. Because Kathy couldn't communicate her wants and needs in words she grabbed toys away from other children. "She became a frustrated, angry little girl."

For Kathy, inclusion wasn't working. Her needs were just too much for a typical program to meet. But this story does have a happy ending. "She entered our program and received individual speech and language therapy three times a week, as well as the language enrichment that occurred within her therapeutic preschool classroom." Kathy stayed in the program until she was five years old. As a result of her gains she was able to enter the regular kindergarten program in her school district. "A follow-up a year later showed she was very successful in kindergarten, both academically and socially," reports Dr. Whiteside.

Clearly, there are children who can and should be integrated into typical community and school programs. But there are no blanket rules which can be invoked. "This needs to be done on a case-by-case basis. The overriding goal should always be to maximize that child's potential." While that may be in a typical program with supportive services, for some youngsters it will be in a special program which can supply the individualized and intensive services those children need in order to grow and develop to their fullest.

It Matters
(for a mother in Iowa)

They say my two year old
can't see
can't hear
can't think
So why
send her to pre-school?
I say
because
just because.
They say
children like her
never go to school

They need
oxygen,
tubes,
hospital bed,
special care
So WHY
send her to pre-school?
I say
just because.
They say...
and on and on
and on, they say.
I'm persistent.
I say
because
because
because.
Then one day
my lioness
"BECAUSE"
wins.
My deaf, blind,
fragile daughter
goes to school.
She has
a teacher
a desk
a book.
At recess
butterscotch sunrays
warm her cheeks
and children's giggles
find paths to her heart.
For six glorious days,
she is finally
a student.
And I am finally
a mother.
Nothing can take that from her
not even her
premature death
six days later.
She was and will always be
my pre-schooler
just because.

Published with permission of author from: It Matters: Lessons from my son by Janice Fialk, MSW, ACSW; 1997

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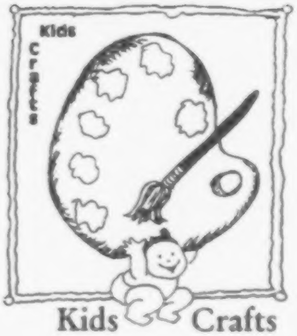


One of the best things about art is that there is no right or wrong way to make something. Everyone can do it. This month, celebrate creativity by encouraging your child to experiment with materials and discover colors and textures. These activities create surprising effects, expand awareness and appreciation of sensory experiences.

Mystery Art

You will need: watercolor paint, white or yellow crayon, brush, watercolor paper

First, have the children draw a design with the crayon, leaving some areas uncovered. The design will be pale and difficult to see against the white paper. Then, have them paint with the watercolor over the entire page. The crayon design will "resist" the watercolor and the design will reappear like magic.

Texture Rubbings Collage

You will need: crayons, with the paper peeled off, large lightweight drawing paper or newsprint paper, masking tape, a variety of textures (e.g. burlap, metal screen, coarse and fine sandpaper, velvet, corrugated cardboard, grainy wood), scissors

Begin by collecting different textures and objects. Help the children cut the materials into various shapes. Have them place the material under the piece of paper and rub the crayon across the paper, using the length of the crayon rather than the tip. As they work with the materials discuss the texture of each item. Once the collage is complete see if they can match the materials to the rubbings. Ask them which textures and objects worked best and which didn't work as well and why.

Clay Ornaments

Your will need: 2 cups corn starch, 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup water, several drops of food coloring, cookie cutters, rolling pin, tempera paints, glue and glitter (optional)

First, mix all the ingredients in a large pot and cook over a medium flame, stirring constantly until it forms a ball. As the mixture cools, knead it. You can store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it. When ready, have the children use a rolling pin to roll out the clay to about 1/8 inch thickness. Ask the children to select their favorite cookie cutters and cut out the shapes. Poke a hole through the top of each form for a piece of ribbon to use as a hanger. Let the ornament dry for at least a day, then the children can personalize the ornament with tempera paints, glue and a sprinkling of glitter.

Blow Painting

You will need: tempera paints, large paint brush, water, large paper, straws, sand (optional)

First kids place a teaspoon of tempera paint on the paper. With the straw, let them blow on the paint, moving it around to make interesting designs. For texture, add a bit of sand to the teaspoon of paint. Apply a second color and blow on it. Watch as the color mixes. Encourage the children to come up with as many combinations as the rainbow. Your children will be delighted as the colors spread and will have fun discovering the shapes they create.

Alphabet Art

You will need: 26 sheets of paper, magazines, scissors, glue

This is a project which children can start and then go back to continue whenever they want, especially as the weather turns cold and blustery. First, make a page for each letter of the alphabet. The children can help by naming the letters aloud. Then, search through magazines for pictures of things that begin with that letter. Encourage the children to find as many pictures as they can. Have the children cut and glue the pictures. This activity is a creative way to encourage letter recognition -- the appearance of the letters and the sounds they make. Once the children have gone through the whole alphabet, which will take some time, make a book of the pages. You can call it "(your child's name) Alphabet Book."

Dear Reader

Last year Karla graduated from high school, and she gave the valedictorian address at the graduation ceremony. She is a brilliant student, and totally blind. Everyone in the community knows Karla, she's been attending school in the same classrooms as all the other children in the neighborhood.

This year, Jason graduated college. Diagnosed as learning disabled and ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) in his early years, he too attended the community school but also received special services and classes. Today, Jason is a licensed pilot (single-engine) and sailing instructor. He's also trying to decide whether to pursue a graduate degree in Psychology, or take a job with the FAA.

This month we feature a warm and informative article on inclusion written by Susan Astor. Susan explains what inclusion is, and why we have it. However, inclusion isn't the answer for every child. To get another perspective on this important and sometimes controversial topic we interviewed Barbara Whiteside, Ph.D., chief psychologist at a therapeutic preschool. Finally, we have the poem *It Matters*. We are grateful to the author, Janice Failk, for allowing us to reprint it. Sometimes we need to walk in someone else's shoes to truly understand an experience.

It's Thanksgiving -- my favorite holiday. My son and I always go to "Uncle" Mike and "Aunt" Robin for dinner. We bring a turkey and they make a roast and the house is filled with friends, and strangers, and kids, and dogs, and cats. And lots of food. And lots of love.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Neala Schwartzberg

Library Resources

Disabilities For Adults

🕮 ***Everybody's Different*** by Nancy B. Miller & Catherine C. Sammons; Paul Brookes Publishing Co; Baltimore, 1999; Softcover. The subtitle of this book is "*Understanding and changing our reactions to disabilities*" and the audience is just about everyone. Chapters describe why people notice and react to differences, how people come to have their own personal reactions to disabilities, and ways to better relate to people with disabilities. There is also a chapter on understanding and guiding children. This book is consciousness-raising at its best.

🕮 ***Retarded Isn't Stupid, Mom!*** (revised edition) by Sandra Z. Kaufman; Paul Brookes Publishing; Baltimore, 1999; Softcover. Nicole Kaufman is retarded. This is her story, as lived by her mother who unstintingly shares the experience; the worry and the triumphs, the fears and concerns. Whether Nicole has embarked on a campaign to get her driver's license, or her own apartment. Whether her parents are helping her out financially, or easing her way where they can and relying on the kindness of others when they can't this is a poignant and honest look at how it feels to be a parent watching a child grow up. There is no "happily ever after," but there is a hard-won wisdom for both Nicole and her parents. It contains a nice resource section of books and organizations.

Thanksgiving

🕮 ***One Little, Two Little, Three Little Pilgrims*** by B.G. Hennessy; illustrated by Lynne Cravath; Viking; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. An engaging counting book with a Thanksgiving theme. Count the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians as they go about their daily tasks and finally all come together to celebrate Thanksgiving. A note at the end by the author provides further information on the lives of these early Americans and the harvest feast that became Thanksgiving.

🕮 ***Thanksgiving Day*** by Anne Rockwell; pictures by Lizzy Rockwell; HarperCollins Publisher; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. A preschool class learns about Thanksgiving by putting on a play. The children, as the Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians, express their thanks for the gifts of the land and from one another.

ABCs

🕮 ***The Airplane Alphabet Book*** by Jerry Pallotta and Fred Stillwell; illustrated by Rob Bolster; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA, 1997; Hardcover, $15.95. If your youngster looks longing at the sky when planes roar overhead, asks lots of questions about the history of flying, this could be the perfect book.

🕮 ***Alice and Aldo*** by Alison Lester; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. Follow Alice and Aldo through their day with lots of examples of each of the letters of the alphabet.

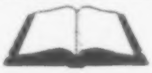
🕮 ***Alphabet Book***; DK Publishing, Inc.; New York, 1997; Oversized hardcover $12.95. This book contains pictures of objects beginning with each letter of the alphabet in a visually complex format, and questions to lead you and your child to focus on the objects and interact with the pictures. Can you find two ambulances? What is the hairy orangutan offering the ostrich? At the end is a list of the objects in each picture.

🕮 ***Alphabet Soup: A feast of letters*** by Scott Gustafson; Greenwich Workshop Press; Shelton, CT, 1994; Hardcover, $15.95. The story begins with Otter who has just moved into his new house. He decides to throw a big housewarming party. He invites 26 of his closest friends, from Armadillo (an award-winning archer who aimed asparagus arrows into the pot) to Zebra (who provided a zesty, zippy zucchini). A beautifully illustrated and engagingly written book.

🕮 ***Robert Crowther's Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book*** by Robert Crowther; Candlewick Press, Cambridge, 1999; Pull-the-tab hardcover, $14.99. Beneath each letter of the alphabet lurks a creature. Young children will love tugging, lifting and pulling to find the critters.

🕮 ***Tomorrow's Alphabet*** by George Shannon; pictures by Donald Crews; Mulberry Paperback; New York, 1996; Softcover, $5.95. A clever way to introduce children to the alphabet, but also to the concept that today's seeds turn into tomorrow's apples; grapes turn into raisins; and more.

🕮 ***V is for Vanishing: An alphabet of endangered animals***; Patricia Mullins; HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1993; Softcover, $6.95. Every day animals become extinct. Once a species dies out, it can never be recovered. Mullins has created a book that teaches children their ABCs and reminds all of us of the wonderful diversity around us, and our need to maintain it.



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INCLUSIÓN
Haciendo Lo Mejor Para Todos Los Niños

Barbara se entretuvo tanto e hizo tanto amigos en el programa local de juego al que fue con su hija de un año, que pensó que sería maravilloso compartir la experiencia con su cuñada, Janet. Convenció a Janet a que se afiliara con su hija Tracy, de casi dos años y que padece de parálisis cerebral.

Tracy se entusiasmó mucho en su primera clase pero cuando se entusiasma grita. Los gritos de Tracy molestó a uno de los padres que se quejó al director diciéndole que no quería estar en la misma clase con Tracy porque la gritería inquietaba a su hijo Jason.

El Director llamó a Janet para explicarle la situación. Inicialmente, Janet estaba muy molesta y no quería seguir participando en el programa, pero Barbara y el Director llegaron a una solución. Decidieron experimentar con Tracy llegando a clases unos pocos minutos antes que los otros niños y padres para que ella se acostumbrara al ambiente y se relajara. Cuando llegaron los padres y los niños, Tracy aun hacía bulla pero no tan fuerte. Ella podía enfocarse en los otros niños y en las actividades. Fue una transición difícil que se hizo más fácil con apoyo y comprensión. Tracy y su mamá fueron incluidas en el grupo de juegos y todos se beneficiaron.

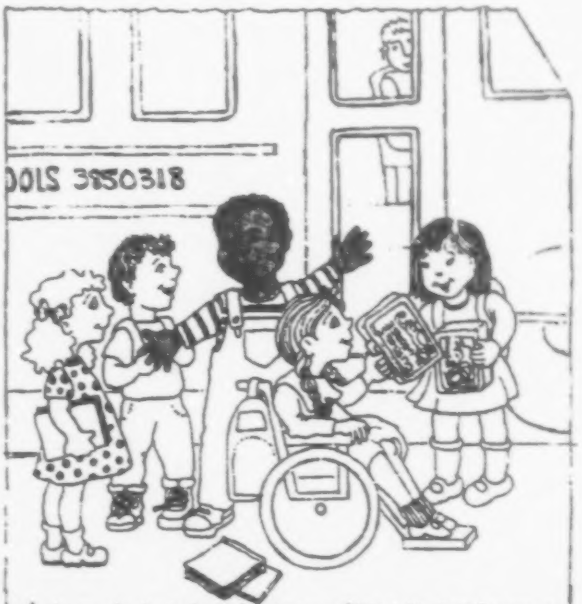
Escenarios como este se están llevando a cabo más frecuentemente a medida que la inclusión es más común. Padres, educadores, y personas comprometidas con la comunidad están de acuerdo que la inclusión de niños descapacitados en programas preescolares es importante. Pero también es controversial.

¿Qué es la Inclusión?

La inclusión es un ideal que refleja una pregunta que hemos estado planteando por milenios: ¿"Cómo podemos vivir con nuestros semejantes"? La inclusión consiste en aprender a vivir los unos con los otros incluyendo a los que tienen necesidades y limitaciones especiales. Los grupos preescolares, los de padres e hijos y las guarderías infantiles son el primer lugar (y el mejor) para iniciar el proceso de inclusión, un proceso que continuará hasta los cursos superiores y en la comunidad en su totalidad.

La inclusión no es un evento único, sino un proceso de educar a niños con limitaciones físicas en su escuela comunitaria: la misma escuela a la cual asistirán normalmente si no fuesen descapacitados. Se refiere al compromiso de educar a cada niño lo máximo posible, como participantes en una sociedad en que a todos los niños se les brinda las mismas oportunidades para poder alcanzar su potencial.

La inclusión "completa" educa a niños con necesidades especiales dentro del aula de educación general y al mismo tiempo suministra cualquier apoyo y las instalaciones necesarias.



La inclusión "parcial" (a veces llamada "mainstreaming" o corriente principal) se refiere a la práctica de educar a estudiantes que tienen necesidades especiales en las aulas de educación general durante una parte del día, mientras se pasan la otra parte del día recibiendo instrucción en un aula de educación especial o sala de recursos.

La Historia de la Inclusión

La tendencia actual hacia la inclusión en realidad empezó con el movimiento de derechos civiles. En 1954, la decision Brown vs. Board of Education marcó el final de la idea que podemos entregar una educación separada pero equitativa. La Ley de Educación para Todos los Niños Descapacitados (Education for all Handicapped Children Act, EHA) de 1975 fue la ley federal más importante que afecta la educación especial; estipulaba una educación pública gratuita en un ambiente lo menos restrictivo posible para niños y jóvenes descapacitados de cinco a 21 años de edad. En 1986, Ley Pública -99 (parte B) aumentó la responsabilidad de la escuela, incluyendo la educación de niños de tres a cinco años de edad, y la (parte H) estableció programas para bebés y niños de escasa edad con necesidades especiales.

Estas disposiciones básicas fueron reautorizadas bajo el nombre Ley de Educación de Personas Descapacitadas (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -IDEA) de 1990 y también reemplazó el vocablo "impedido" por "descapacitado." Actualmente, EHA/IDEA le da el derecho a la educación a todos los estudiantes descapacitados en un "ambiente menos restrictivo" y "apropiado a lo máximo posible." Esto quiere decir que la educación debe llevarse a cabo en ambientes naturales, incluyendo el ambiente del hogar y de la comunidad en donde participan niños sin descapacidades, mientras reciben el apoyo necesario para satisfacer sus necesidades individuales.

La implementación de este ideal se ha convertido en un desafío para todos y a veces suscita fuertes sentimientos. ¿Por qué darle la bienvenida a personas descapacitadas frecuentemente suscita reacciones intensas? La inclusión no es simplemente poner a un niño con necesidades especiales en un aula o grupo infantil normal. La inclusión es la manera en que enfrentamos o evitamos manejar nuestras propias diferencias, debilidades y temores.

¿Cuales son las Posibles Ventajas de la Inclusión?

Uno de los resultados que frecuentemente se olvida es el cambio de actitud de los maestros, padres, tanto como los niños sin necesidades especiales. La compasión y la sensibilidad crecen cuando enfrentamos nuestros temores y preocupaciones y ayudamos a nuestros semejantes. Los padres informan que los típicos niños en desarrollo matriculados en ambientes integrados demuestran menos prejuicios, menos estereotipos, y responden mejor y son más serviciales con otros. Los profesores informan que los niños sin descapacidades tienen mas conciencia sobre las necesidades de otros cuando están inscritos en una clase que incluye a un niño descapacitado. La educación inclusiva beneficia a los típicos niños en desarrollo al fomentar un respeto por la diversidad humana. También podemos aprender gratitud por todo lo que tenemos, compasión por las luchas de otros, y la tenacidad y triunfo del espíritu humano cuando observamos a un niño que tiene necesidades especiales luchando y teniendo éxito en sus metas y objetivos.

Qué mejor manera de aprender estas lecciones que viviéndolas con niños y padres que están todos los días en el proceso de descubrir que lo que parece ser una tragedia puede ser superada y también traer éxito y satisfacción.

Josine Mash, la madre de Brandon de nueve años, que padece de autismo, explica esta dicotomía en un artículo, Could we Truly Appreciate the Sun if it Weren't for the Rain? (¿Podríamos Realmente Apreciar el Sol si no Fuera por la Lluvia?), en el boletín de la escuela de su hijo. Aunque habla sobre "...el dolor de no poder conversar con su propio hijo, la persona que uno más adora..." ella enfoca en su lucha por el desarrollo. "Su lenguaje emergió lentamente, en etapas, a través de los años... Como un visitante a una tierra extraña, él lucha por descifrar nuestro lenguaje. El color amarillo oscuro es 'amarillo marino' y un tarro de pasta blanca es 'vainilla'"... Ella también habla sobre todo lo que ha aprendido siendo parte de este proceso. ¿"Podríamos realmente apreciar el sol si no fuera por la lluvia? Una vez vi un arco iris maravillosos en un arco sobre el océano. Cada vez que escucho la voz de mi hijo siento que estoy viendo ese arco iris, con su promesa en mis manos".

La inclusión trae a la profesora de educación especial y otros profesionales al aula normal para ayudar, no solo al niño con necesidades especiales, sino que también al resto de los niños. Esto quiere decir que la detección temprana de problemas del desarrollo pueden ser manejados antes que causen problemas conductuales o problemas de aprendizaje.

A pesar de ciertas aprensiones sobre estar en una clase integrada de alguna manera retrasaría el desarrollo de los niños normales, se ha visto que niños con desarrollo normal matriculados en programas integrados tienen el un incremento en desarrollo por lo menos equivalente al de sus pares en programas no integrados.

¿Por qué? Las estrategias educacionales para la inclusión son las mismas utilizadas para todos los niños: la creación de un ambiente rico en diversidad, aprendizaje, apoyo y respeto para todos los niños y sus necesidades individuales, permitiéndole a todo niño o niña lograr su potencial.

Evidentemente, existen beneficios reales para los niños con necesidades especiales. La mayoría de la gente está de acuerdo que el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de los niños es una meta primaria, y eso generalmente se hace a través del juego y el desarrollo de amistades. ¿Donde encontramos a muchos de nuestros amigos? En la familia, barrio, escuela, guarderías infantiles, kindergartens, y grupos de juego. Pero los niños con necesidades especiales frecuentemente solo ven a la familia o a profesionales. Lo que les falta es la interacción normal con otros niños. "Un niño amigo común y silvestre puede lograr todo tipo de milagros en aprendizaje más que un aula llena de educadores especiales, fonólogos, y trabajadores sociales pueden lograr", escribe Debra Kendrick, una periodista con dificultades a la vista (Cincinnati Enquirer, 8/3/1991). A donde nos lleva esto? De vuelta a Tracy y a los otros niños que forman amistades que pueden durar hasta sus años de escuela y quiza por mas tiempo aun.

¿Cuales son las Posibles Desventajas?

Las investigaciones confirman los beneficios sociales de la inclusión. Sin embargo, la inclusión requiere intervenciones planificadas de habilidades sociales, como por ejemplo, ayudar a los niños a compartir, hacer amigos y fomentar el juego entre los niños descapacitados y no descapacitados. Equipos especiales y cambios en el entorno físico pueden ser necesarios para apoyar estas intervenciones. Arreglar la sala en una variedad de centros de interés alienta a grupos pequeños de dos a tres niños a jugar juntos. Es posible que se necesite equipo adaptable para promover el juego o para incluso hacer posible el juego. Un niño que normalmente está en una silla de ruedas puede necesitar un aparato especial (stander) para ayudarle a pararse para que pueda participar al mismo nivel físico de los otros niños.

La inclusión total puede ser una manera de cumplir con la ley, pero no todos están de acuerdo sobre sus beneficios. Muchos temen que la inclusión total eliminaría todas las programas especiales, incluyendo los servicios de fonología, terapia física y terapia ocupacional. Temen la disminución de escuelas especializadas para las personas que no pueden beneficiarse de la inclusión a aulas normales. Los padres de niños con necesidades especiales están preocupados que la inclusión total podría perjudicar el desarrollo educacional de sus niños. Algunos niños descapacitados no tendrán éxito en un aula normal. Quizás necesiten servicios especializados que no están disponibles en un ámbito educacional normal.

Claramente, hay que adoptar decisiones educacionales caso por caso, con conocimiento de las muchas maneras que existen para recibir los servicios requeridos. La mejor opción es la que es mejor para cada niño.Inclusión a una clase típica no debe ser una política firme para todos los niños descapacitados pero si debe ser una opción disponible. Se debe usar extrema prudencia para que la inclusión total no tenga como resultado el aislamiento social, mal rendimiento, o un ambiente en que los servicios no existen o no son apropiados para la familia.

Inclusión Total ? Haciéndola Funcionar Para Todos

Para que tenga éxito, la familia y el niño con necesidades especiales necesitaran personal de apoyo suplementario cuando se está en un programa educacional o recreativo regular. Personal, el tamaño de la clase, el número de niños descapacitados, y la naturaleza y calidad de la limitación del niño son factores importantes. Idealmente el número de niños con necesidades especiales en un aula debe ser parecido a la proporción en la sociedad, donde aproximadamente uno de cada 15 niños norteamericanos tiene alguna descapacidad física. Esto aumenta la oportunidad para que los niños se conozcan y se aprecien sin superar la capacidad de los maestros y estudiantes.

Los ingredientes claves son el desarrollo del personal, las habilidades del personal, y programación de calidad. Las actitudes sobre inclusión, acceso a especialistas y planificación en colaboración y curriculum son los factores adicionales que influencian el éxito de la inclusión. Los profesores necesitan capacitación especial y los niños necesitan preparación especial para que estos programas prosperen.
La inclusión es un valor, muy parecido al compromiso con la igualdad racial y de género. Tal vez no sea siempre fácil. Puede requerir cambios y acuerdos, pero el proceso de inclusión y el alentar a cada niño le permite a cada persona desarrollar sus talentos y habilidades. También nos da la oportunidad a todos a desarrollar las cualidades tan anheladas de compasión, empatía, y ser útil. Nos puede enseñar, a nosotros y a nuestros niños, que entre más diversidad, más rica será nuestra capacidad de crear una sociedad más humana y más respetuosa.

Susan Astor, Magister en Educación especial, es educadora especial de niños de temprana edad y Presidente de Eduplay Corp., que opera Playorena y Music & More. La Sa. Astor es tambien coautora de Gymbore Giving your child physical, mental, and social confidence through play.

Inclusión: No Siempre es la Solución

Basado en una entrevista con Barbara Whiteside, Ph.D
La Dra. Whiteside es la Supervisora de Servicios Sicológicos en St. Charles Educational and Therapeutic Center, un programa para niños recién nacidos hasta cinco años c necesidades especiales. El Centro está ubicado en Pt. Jefferson en Long Island, New York.

Los niños que asisten al programa tienen déficits documentados de tal magnitud que requieren un ambiente educacional altamente estructurado e intensivo con terapias apropiadas. "Sus necesidades no pueden ser apropiadamente satisfechas dentro de un típico ámbito preescolar o guardería infantil", dice la Dra. Whiteside.

"La meta de la inclusión es siempre mantener a los niños con necesidades especiales en el ambiente menos restrictivo, y trabajar hacia ponerlos en un entorno lo más normal posible", dice la Dra. Whiteside, "idealmente, asistiendo a la escuela local donde van la mayoría de sus pares". Sin embargo, un aula típica no siempre es el mejor lugar para estos niños. "La inclusión no es apropiada para todos los niños con necesidades especiales, o para los otros niños en el aula de inclusión".

Cuando las necesidades de los niños superan la capacidad de los profesores, de los otros niños y la habilidad de la escuela de dar servicios efectivos, La Dra. Whiteside sugiere que todos estarían mejor servidos colocando niños en programas especiales que tienen servicios intensivos y una proporción más pequeña de personal a niños.

Cada estado tiene sus propios reglamentos. Por ejemplo, en el estado de Nueva York, los reglamentos requieren que cada aula de niños de necesidades especiales tenga un profesor certificado en educación especial y un número apropiado de asistentes y ayudantes de maestros determinado por el estado. Estos profesionales deben tener capacitación intensiva y especial para trabajar con niños que tienen déficits y dificultades. "Los profesores de guarderías infantiles pueden tener alguna capacitación, pero es poco probable que tengan el mismo nivel de capacitación", dice la Dra. Whiteside.

Lejos de ser una manera de "almacenar" a estos jóvenes, "el punto de estos programas es minimizar los servicios que necesitaran en el futuro dando intervenciones intensivas y apropiadas a una temprana edad. Estos niños adquieren las habilidades que necesitan para ser colocados en un ambiente menos restrictivo en el futuro", acota la Dra. Whiteside. Kathy fue identificada alrededor de los tres años con un déficit de lenguaje y de habla tan severo que estaba afectando su desarrollo cognitivo, social, y social. Tenía problemas de aprender conceptos. No podía comprender tamaño o color. A pesar que Kathy tenía una inteligencia normal, su retraso lingüístico le estaba impidiendo aprender estos conceptos apropiados a su edad. También impedía su capacidad de hacerse amiga con los otros niños. "No se estaba integrando, no tenía el lenguaje para hacer cosas imaginativas o jugar como los otros niños, así que siempre estaba sentada sola", explica la Dra. Whiteside. Ya que Kathy no podía comunicar sus necesidades en palabras ella le quitaba los juguetes a los otros niños. "Se convirtió en una niña muy frustrada y arisca".

Para Kathy la inclusión no funcionaba. Sus necesidades eran simplemente muy grandes para un programa típico. Pero este cuento tiene un final feliz. "Se enroló en nuestro programa que se llevó a cabo dentro de su aula terapéutica preescolar y recibió terapia individual en lenguaje y fonología tres veces a la semana, y también enriquecimiento del lenguaje tres veces a la semana". Kathy se quedó en el programa hasta cumplir los cinco años. Como resultado de su progreso ella pudo entrar a un programa de kindergarten regular en su propio distrito escolar. "Un seguimiento un año después demostró que tuvo mucho éxito en kindergarten, a nivel académico y social", informa la Dra. Whiteside.

Hay, claramente, niños que pueden y deben ser integrados en una comunidad y programa escolar típico. Pero no se pueden invocar reglas fijas. "Esto tiene que hacerse caso por caso. La meta fundamental siempre debe ser maximizar el potencial del niño". Mientras que eso puede ser verdad en un programa típico con servicios de apoyo. Para algunos niños será un programa especial el que puede darles los servicios individualizados e intensivos que esos niños necesitan para crecer y desarrollarse al máximo.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER
CARING FOR THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 Parents' Choice Approval Award

Volume 14, Number 11 — *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* — December 1999

ANGER
When Children Push Your Buttons

Anger is a powerful, sometimes scary emotion. Like all emotions it provides energy, allowing us to turn our intentions into action. It provides the fuel for our behavior. When we encounter something that is potentially dangerous or poses a threat, anger helps us to fight it effectively. It is part of the "fight or flight" response that has kept both animals and humans safe for eons.

We also react with anger even when our physical safety isn't threatened. We get angry when people threaten our self-esteem or pride, or thwart our attainment of a goal. In those situations, anger can derail us from solving the problem. Instead of using our energy to make a situation better, we use it to fight other people, and get back at them for hurting us.

Unfortunately, children can, unwittingly or on purpose, quickly provoke a parent's anger. Why? Because children are not always polite, or sensitive. They challenge our authority, try our patience, and make us confront the limits of our knowledge and wisdom.

The Process of Feeling and Acting in Anger

Whether or not we get angry depends on many factors; not only what our child just said and did, but also his previous behavior. Our reaction depends on other factors as well such as where it happened, who was there, what happened previously in our lives. Take, for example, Andrea, a 28-year-old mother who was picking up her son from school, with her two-year-old daughter in tow. After saying good-bye to her son's teacher, she turned to her daughter, "Come Miranda, we're going home." Miranda didn't move. With some irritation, Andrea said, "We're going home now," and reached for Miranda's hand. Miranda pulled back and said loudly, "Mommy, No!" Andrea immediately slapped Miranda across the face, picked her up, and said, "You're coming with me," while the stunned teacher watched them walk down the street.

Andrea was deeply embarrassed – almost shamed – by her daughter's behavior. How could Miranda defy her authority in front of the teacher? Though Miranda's behavior might have been mildly irritating at home, it triggered a much bigger reaction because it was in public. Andrea's embarrassment and anger overrode her own judgment and, in an instant, she snapped.

Clearly the way we interpret the situation directly influences our response. If we interpret a child's deeds as a challenge to our already shaky authority, we are very like to choose an authoritarian action, e.g. a punishment. This is what Andrea did. If instead, we interpret the same behavior as experimenting and testing limits, we may decide to set the boundaries by offering her a choice: e.g., "Do you want to walk home or do you want me to carry you?"

Our physiological state also affects our reactions. Both fatigue and stress make it more difficult for us to slow down our anger and give us a chance to stop and think before we react. As a result, we may react

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quicker and more intensely. If we have been involved in a sequence of stressful interactions -- perhaps Andrea's son's teacher chastised Andrea for his behavior -- we may be even more likely to react in anger.

Sometimes though, we can think of only a few possible responses to the misbehavior. Then we are limited in how we react. If all a parent can think of is to punish the misdeed she will be unlikely to consider other interpretations and solutions. The possibility of a child's being hungry and cranky (solution: understand outburst and give child snack or a nap) or in need of positive attention (solution: praise child for behavior up until now, urge continued good behavior) will not be considered.

Effects of Anger on Children

Anger which belittles the child ("You are a stupid idiot. Get out of my sight. I can't stand you.") is always hurtful. However, if we occasionally get angry at a child's behavior and verbally express it (for example: "I can't stand this! This place is a mess. I come home from a long day of work and it feels like I have to clean up after everyone. I am sick and tired of this.") the child learns her parents are human and capable of strong emotions. Discussing the angry exchange afterwards can help a child to understand her parents' feelings and may also help her to understand her own feelings.

Chronic parental anger, however, will have negative effects.

✦ Children may become frightened of their own and other's anger. They may avoid feeling or expressing anger or may avoid being around others who are angry. Since anger can be a useful signal that something is wrong and needs attention, people who avoid anger lose this important signal. They don't recognize that there's a problem so they can't begin to solve it. When children don't learn how to use anger constructively, they sometimes end up trying to please everyone to avoid the possibility of anger and fighting.

ANGER
ANGER

✦ Children may begin to tune out and distance themselves from their angry parents. Eventually the child may do this not only when parents are angry but at other times too -- thus becoming distant and losing the possibility of a close and loving relationship.

✦ Children may learn to tolerate parental anger in exchange for being able to do what they want. For example, a parent gets angry at his children for leaving toys all over the living room, but picks up the toys himself. The children learn that they don't have to clean up their mess, that parental anger (without real consequences) is the price to be paid for being free to do what they want.

✦ Children may provoke their parents' anger as a way of getting attention. Some parents ignore much of their children's positive behavior and react most when their children misbehave. If we don't give children positive attention, they will likely seek negative attention through misbehavior. Taking this a step further, children may actually come to enjoy angering their parents because it gives them a feeling of power and control.

Preventing Inappropriate Anger

How, then, do we stop ourselves from reacting in anger too much and too often to our children's sometimes very provocative behaviors?

→ **Remember that it is often our own thoughts, insecurities, and problems which drive our anger not just our children's behavior.**

▲ *Feeling ineffective*. Everyone enjoys feeling competent. But raising children is an extremely difficult and challenging undertaking. Feeling incompetent or ineffective can trigger anger. Then it is the child who is clearly in the wrong and the parent who is clearly in the right – and the parent regains a sense of effectiveness. Andrea was probably feeling ineffective when she became so angry at Miranda because she was unable to coax her to start walking home.

▲ *Taking on too much responsibility*. Parents have enough to do without taking on their children's chores. Often parents do not know how to obtain their children's cooperation in these tasks. It becomes simpler to pick up the toys, put the clothes away, or set the table. But when parents do this they feel overwhelmed and resentful. The result? Anger directed towards the child.

▲ *Shaky parental self-image*. Many parents fall into the trap of seeing their children's behavior as a direct reflection on their success as parents. When their children misbehave or do not succeed, it hurts the parent's view of herself. A parent might think: "If I was a really effective parent my child would be more polite," or "get good grades," or "do his chores," or "not give me a hard time when I tell her it's time to leave."

▲ *Taking it personally*. Some parents assume that children misbehave to hurt them. While this might be true at times, acting on this belief only exacerbates the problem, making it worse rather than better.

▲ *Being more comfortable with your*

own anger than your child's anger or unhappiness. When parents set firm limits, children sometimes respond with anger and tears. This, in turn, upsets the parent, who reacts with anger. For example, Susan leaves her bike in the driveway, again. Dad decides to lock it up for one week. When Susan hears of this she becomes very upset and throws a tantrum. If Dad becomes angry at Susan's explosion and yells, Susan would probably think how mean her father is and learn little from the experience. But, if Dad can remain calm while Susan is so upset, and later talks to her about it, Susan is much more likely to focus on her own irresponsibility and see the link between her actions and the consequences.

▲ ***Being prevented from attaining a goal.*** Children sometimes make it hard for us to do what we want or need to do. The goal may be as simple as relaxing after a hard day's work or getting a good night's sleep. We may become frustrated, lose our patience and our temper. Other times, the goal is more complex, e.g., preparing a report for work, studying for an exam. A parent's sense of achievement may be at stake. When a child's behavior interferes with achieving our goals it may bring on a parent's wrath because of our own worries and frustration.

→ Identify the sources of stress in our lives that set the stage for anger.

Do we routinely take on too much so that we are constantly under pressures from deadlines and overwork? Is our ambition getting the better of us -- clouding our judgment and making it difficult to set priorities? Are job stresses overwhelming us? Do we find it difficult to ask for help -- from colleagues, spouses, children? Are we somehow making life even harder by martyring ourselves (even if only a little bit) saying things like: "Only I can do this right," or "No one knows how much I do," or "My family would be lost without me." If so, we are running the risk of subjecting our children to inappropriate anger.

→ Increase our skills in understanding our children's behavior, determining what they need, and providing it.

How does a parent do this? One way is to provide structure so that children know what to expect and are prepared for what is going to happen. Develop routines for getting up, mealtimes, and bedtime. Set aside time to instruct a child in expected behaviors. Explain how to behave when going to a restaurant or where to put away toys and other possessions. It's hard for children to behave if they aren't sure of the rules.

There are also times when we need to discuss a situation with the child and help him solve a behavior problem. This requires asking good questions that help us understand children's thoughts and then listening to what they have to say -- not teaching, not lecturing, not suggesting. Once you find out what your child's experience of a situation is, you can help him develop ideas to improve the situation. But this is only possible if we thoughtfully act rather than angrily react.

Martha Edwards, Ph.D. is a family therapist in private practice and faculty member at the Ackerman Institute for the Family.

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Hmmm ...

Your five-year-old is using foul language, your three-year-old is desperately trying to imitate him, your dinner is burning on the stove and you are about to lose it. Your buttons have been pushed so long that they seem stuck in the "on" position. What should you do?

1. **Blow the whistle.** Like a smart referee it is okay to say "Stop!" The surprise of your definitive shout can end the cycle of difficult behavior and help you feel some control.

2. **Time out** is another great way to stop the negative action. You can use it with an out-of-control youngster to give her a chance to calm down but you can also use it for yourself. Put on a video for the kids, grab your phone and call your best friend. Or go into another room and put on your favorite music. Take a shower or a long bath.

3. Even during tense moments you can **find humor**, not easily, but often it's there waiting for you. Did your toddler get hold of the toilet paper and decorate the house? If you have a camera, grab it and take a picture. In years to come this could become one of your favorite memories. Did your six-year-old decide to surprise you with a "cake" and only got as far as spilling everything on the floor? Take a deep breath and hope she becomes a world famous chef someday.

4. **Don't worry about what other people are thinking.** Kids misbehaving in public? Remember that it is the rare parent who hasn't been in your shoes. They are probably just grateful that this time it isn't happening to them.

5. Lastly, **remember that you are the model** for your children's behavior, even (or perhaps especially) when you are angry. What you do, how you act, what you say tells them the way to handle their own anger. Show your children how to handle this powerful emotion and you will have taught them a very valuable lesson.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW

Dear Reader

Without a doubt, anger is a tricky emotion. I come from a family of easily angered people. And, I confess, I enjoy the surge of adrenalin-produced exhilaration. But although I have a quick temper I rarely express anger much anymore. Adult temper tantrums are no more attractive than children's tantrums – and about as effective in solving problems. I use anger mainly to let me know that something is wrong somewhere and that I need to undertake the far more difficult and crucial process of figuring out why I'm so angry, and what to do about it.

This month we're delighted that Martha Edwards, Ph.D. returns to write the feature for ***Parent & preschooler*** *Anger: When children push your buttons*. Last year she wrote the excellent article on marital conflict. This year she's writing about anger...and parent-child conflict.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW, has written on what to do when you (and your child) get angry, which every parent will find helpful. If your children regularly push your buttons, you might want to keep this piece handy.

As always, we have Library Resources, but this month with separate sections on holiday books as well as books on anger and on difficult to handle children. Of course Sandra Allen provides us with delicious recipes and a "taste" of Brazilian culture.

May the coming year be filled with peace, health, and happiness.

Preschooler in the Kitchen

New Year's always brings me good memories of my young years in Brazil. New Year's Eve was considered the evening of the families. The whole clan would gather in a relative's house and celebrate the new year with joy, food, music, and dance. One of the customs was to have jelly rolls prepared in advance to offer the neighborhood children when they knocked at the door asking for a "brinde", or gift. Every cook has his or her own special recipes for jelly roll. This is one of mine which I prepared many times when I lived in Brazil. Adults and preschoolers will have a good time making and eating this dessert.

Coconut & Apricot Jelly Roll (*Rocambole*)

Take your children with you to the market and show them an apricot and a coconut. If it is not the season for them, perhaps you can find a picture. Hold the coconut in your hands and shake it. If it makes the sound of water that means the coconut is good. It should feel heavy, and the eyes should be clean, without any mold, or mildew. You can use unsweetened, toasted coconut. If you can only find sweetened coconut, you can use it but rinse it in cold water first. Then drain the water very well using a very fine sieve. Spread it on a dish towel and gently squeeze to remove most of the liquid. Then put the coconut on a cookie sheet and bake in the oven at 300F for about ½ hour until the coconut is dry; checking and stirring once or twice.

Now, we're ready to bake. Wash your hands everybody, and be sure that you have all the ingredients and utensils ready before starting.

• ***Preparing the jelly roll pan:***
1 baking pan: 15X11X½"
Waxed or parchment paper
Unflavored oil spray or melted butter
2 clean dry dish towels

✦ Child-Spray the baking pan with oil, or brush with melted butter then line the baking pan with waxed or parchment paper. Spray the paper with oil, or brush it with melted butter. Set the baking pan aside.

✦ Adult-Set the oven at 350F.

• ***Jelly roll batter:***
6 eggs, at room temperature, separated
1/8 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons fine granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract mixed with 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
6 tablespoons sifted flour (sift flour before measuring)
1 teaspoon lime zest, mixed with 2 tablespoons fine granulated sugar
1/2 cup powdered sugar (to sprinkle on the baked cake)

✦ Adult-Show your child how to separate the yolks from the egg whites.

✦ Child-Place the egg whites in a large clean and dry stainless steel bowl. Bowl must be very clean or else the eggs whites will not rise. Place the egg yolks into another separate bowl, set it aside.

✦ Adult-Beat the egg whites until frothy.

✦ Child-Add the salt.

✦ Adult-Beat for 2 minutes longer.

✦ Child-Add the lime zest/sugar mixture one tablespoon at a time to the egg whites. Continue beating until the mixture forms firm peaks. Set aside.

✦ Adult-Using the same beaters beat the egg yolks for about 5 minutes until light in color.

✦ Child-Start adding the remaining 6 tablespoons of sugar, one spoon at a time.

✦ Adult-Continue beating until the mixture is light in color and forms ribbons.

✦ Child-Add the vanilla and cinnamon mixture. Continue beating for 1 minute longer.

✦ Adult-To the egg yolk mixture, add 2 tablespoons flour and 1/3 of the egg-white meringue, folding the mixture gently using a whisk. Let the child keep adding the remaining flour and meringue mixture, while you keep folding them until all the flour and meringue are used.

✦ Child-Spread the batter in the prepared baking sheet.

✦ Adult-Place the baking sheet in the oven. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until lightly golden in color.

✦ Child-Place the dish towel on a large board, or on the outside bottom part of another baking sheet, a little larger than the one in which the cake is baked.

✦ Adult-Remove the cake from the oven. Place the board or baking sheet over the cake, and turn it upside down to unmold. Peel off and discard the paper.

✦ Child-Sprinkle the powdered sugar over the cake. Adult-If you are going to fill the cake immediately, while the cake is baking, prepare the filling.

• ***Filling for the cake:***
1½ cups apricot jam
2 tablespoons lime juice
1 cup unsweetened coconut, grated, and toasted
½ cup pineapple juice
1 cup unsweetened coconut, grated, and toasted (separate from the other cup of coconut)

✦ Child-Measure the apricot jam and the lime juice. Place in a small pan, then mix thoroughly.

✦ Adult-Bring the jam mixture to a low heat. Simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring so it doesn't burn. Remove from the heat and set aside.

✦ Child-Measure 1 cup coconut and set aside and then measure a second cup of coconut and set this cup aside.

» » » *Continued on Page 5.*

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• ***Assemble the jelly roll:***

✦ Adult-Unroll the jelly roll. Cut away any dry edges.

✦ Child-Sprinkle or brush the pineapple juice over the entire surface of the cake. Spread the 1 cup apricot-lime jam over the cake. Sprinkle the one cup of coconut over the jam.

✦ Adult-Roll the cake.

✦ Child-Spread the remaining apricot jam over the top of the rolled cake. Sprinkle with the remaining cup of coconut.

✦ Adult-Place the cake on a platter. Refrigerate until serving (if you can wait that long). Cut into round slices and serve.

Ah, now the reward. You have worked hard. Sit down and enjoy the jelly roll. I wish I could join you in having a slice and toasting to a very Happy New Year.

Sandy Allen

A Special Gift for Our Readers

Holiday Books

📖 ***Dumpling Soup*** by Jama Kim Rattigan; illustrated by Lillian Hsu-Flanders; Little Brown & Company; New York, 1993; Softcover, $5.95. It's New Year's Eve in Hawaii and Marisa's multi-ethnic family is celebrating the way they always do, with a big feast. This year Marisa is seven years old and she can help make the dumplings. Join the warm family celebration and even make Jama's dumpling soup from the recipe in the book.

📖 ***Franklin's Christmas Gift*** by Paulette Bourgeois; illustrated by Brenda Clark; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1998; Softcover, $4.50. Franklin's class at school is collecting donations for the toy drive. All the children are bringing in new or gently used toys, but Franklin can't decide what to give until he realizes that "The best presents are special to give and to receive… ."

📖 ***Hanukkah!*** A three-dimensional celebration by Sara Freedland; illustrated by Sue Clarke; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Massachusettes, 1991; Three-dimensional, $18.99. Although more appropriate for older children (seven and above), the pop-ups, dreidl game (with a put-it-together dreidl included) will delight the little ones. The book tells the history of Hanukkah for the whole family.

📖 ***Hanukkah!*** by Roni Schotter; illustrated by Marylin Hafner; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1990; Softcover, $5.95. A warm family celebration of Hanukkah from lighting the menorah, making potato pancakes, opening the presents and going to bed.

📖 ***Hurray for Three Kings' Day*** by Lori Marie Carlson; illustrated by Ed Martinez; Morrow Junior Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. Join Anita and her family as they celebrate Three Kings' Day (el Dia de los Reyes). The story combines observances of several Latino communities to form a rich and evocative observance.

📖 ***It's Kwanzaa Time!*** by Linda and Clay Goss; illustrated by award-winning artists; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 1995; Hardcover, $19.95. Wonderful stories to illustrate the principles of the seven days of Kwanzaa, the history of the holiday, crafts, games, and songs. The luminous illustrations were created by some of today's best artists.

📖 ***Kwanzaa: A family affair*** by Mildred Pitts Walter; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1995; Hardcover. Although written for older children (and without illustrations), this book is full of information and suggestions for activities to do each day of Kwanzaa and a reading list. There are special sections on recipes, and crafts (including how to make a kinara candle holder).

📖 ***Maccabee Jamboree: A Hanukkah countdown*** by Cheri Holland; illustrated by Roz Schanzer; Kar-Ben Copies, Inc.; Rockville, MD, 1998; Softcover. Countdown with the children as they make cards, exchange gifts, play games and enjoy the Hanukkah celebration.

📖 ***The Night Before Christmas*** by Clement Clarke Moore; illustrated by Lis Toft; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 1997; Softcover, $3.99 and ***The Night Before Christmas: A visit from St. Nicholas*** by Clement C. Moore; illustrated by Max Grover; Browndeer Press; San Diego, CA, 1999; Hardcover, $16.00. The poem that has enchanted children (and their parents) for years is reproduced with colorful illustrations in both of these books. A poem that is part of a Christmas tradition.

📖 ***The Snow Tree*** by Caroline Repchuk; illustrated by Josephine Martin, Dutton Children's Books; New York, 1996; Hardcover, $13.99. A very satisfying book on all levels. The paper is extra thick and embossed so you can feel the snow flakes and white snow covered landscaped as well as the fur on the carefully drawn animals. It's the story of Little Bear who woke one morning and the world was white. "Where have all the colors gone?" he asked. Then slowly the animals came out each bearing an offering of nature, like orange leaves to remember the "warm glow of fall and the burning sunset of an evening sky" and decorate the snow tree to "celebrate the glory of nature and the beauty of peace and friendship this Christmas time."

Winter - Winter - Winter

📖 ***Everything for Winter:*** *A complete activity book for teachers of young children* edited by Kathy Charner; Gryphon House; Beltsville, MD, 1997; Softcover, $24.95. Organized by month of the year (December through February), age of child and type of activity, this book is a compendium of all kinds of activities for young children. It includes songs to sing for each month, art activities, circle time, dramatic play, language, math and more. Although developed for teachers, parents will find a wealth of ideas to use for their own children, especially on those long bad-weather winter days.

● **In the Winter Garden**: We all think there is nothing to be done in the garden in winter. But winter is the time for dreaming. This is the time to plan our garden, explore seed catalogues, make sketches of where we will plant different kinds of flowers and vegetables. An apartment dweller? How about planning some container gardening. We know of people who even grow lettuce, onions, and tomatoes for their salad bowl in the middle of a Manhattan apartment. No gardening in winter? Think again …

Library Resources

Books on Anger

🕮 ***Anger: The misunderstood emotion*** by Carol Tavris, A Touchstone Book - Simon & Schuster; New York, 1989; Paperback, $11. This book remains a classic. Tavris discusses the research on anger, and the myths we hold about this emotion. In lively readable language she describes the biology of anger, its use and abuse, triggers, and ways to handle anger. It covers a wide range of topics fully and with plenty of anecdotes. It is one of my favorite books on this topic.

🕮 ***Angry All the Time: An emergency guide to anger control*** by Ron Potter-Efron, New Harbinger Publications, Inc.; Oakland, CA, 1994; Paperback, $12.95. Everyone gets angry, but for some people anger has become a way of life. They don't just "get" angry; they are angry – habitually angry. It may be a physical anger, or a verbal hurtful anger. If this describes you, or someone close to you, this is the book to read. Potter-Efron talks about where anger comes from, how people become chronically angry; why people hold on to anger; and, most important, how to stop being angry.

🕮 ***The Dance of Anger*** by Harriet Lerner, HarperPerennial; New York, 1997; Paperback, $14. This is the other of my favorite books on anger. It is aimed at women, but it was a male friend who originally told me how much it helped him. Lerner focuses more on relationships and how anger operates within that framework. She discusses (and illustrates with anecdotes from her extensive clinical practice) why people have problems expressing anger, and how we often misuse this emotion making relationships with the important people in our lives worse instead of better.

🕮 ***Love and Anger: The parental dilemma*** by Nancy Samalin; Penguin Books; New York, 1991; Paperback, $10. What happens when children disobey us, dawdle, whine, refuse to do what they're supposed to be doing? We get mad and sometimes punish too harshly, or inappropriately. Then we feel guilty. We push our children's buttons and they push ours. The situations in this book will feel very familiar to parents, but Samalin offers solid techniques parents can use to alleviate the every-day anger. There's also a chapter on children fighting with siblings and other youngsters.

🕮 ***When Anger Hurts Your Kids: A parent's guide*** by Matthew McKay, Patrick Fanning, Kim Paleg, and Dana Landis; New Harbinger Publications, Inc., Oakland, CA, 1996; Paperback, $12.95. Based on the results of their study of parents and anger and the research of others, the authors have put together a program to help parents assess their anger level, and determine if their anger is hurting their children's development. It provides a model for why parents become angry, alternative explanations for children's behavior which triggers anger, and ways to handle anger.

🕮 ***How to Handle a Hard-to-Handle Kid*** by C. Drew Edwards, Ph.D.; Free Spirit Publishing; Minneapolis, MN, 1998; Softcover, $15.95. This book helps parents differentiate hard-to-handle/high maintenance behavior from children's normal behavior. Edwards describes various parenting techniques with a strong focus on *Authoritative Parenting*. The book goes on to explain how becoming an authoritative parent will help you and your children deal with, and better understand their hard to handle behavior.

🕮 ***The Challenging Child*** by Stanley I. Greenspan, MD; Perseus Books; Reading MA, 1995; Softcover, $13.00. This book is based on the premise that most difficult children fall into five basic types: sensitive, self-absorbed, defiant, inattentive, and active/aggressive. Each type is described in depth with examples to help parents ascertain into which category their children belong. For each unique type the author suggests various techniques to help parents better understand their children and encourage them to flourish.

In Coming Months...

- **How to "Read" Your Child**
- **Physical Fitness**
- **Children's Dreams**

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La Ira

Cuando los Niños Nos Hacen Perder la Paciencia.

La ira es un sentimiento fuerte que a veces, hasta nos asusta. Como todos las emociones produce energía, la que permite convertir nuestras intenciones en acciones. La energía es el combustible de nuestro comportamiento. Cuando nos encontramos frente a algo potencialmente peligroso o amenazante, la ira ayuda a que lo combatamos con eficacia. Es parte de la respuesta "volar o luchar" que ha mantenido a los animales y al hombre seguros desde tiempos inmemoriales.

Podemos hasta reaccionar con ira en casos que no presentan un reto para nuestra seguridad física. Nos enfadamos cuando las personas atentan contra nuestra estima personal u orgullo, o tratan de impedir que alcancemos una meta. En esas situaciones, la ira puede impedir que resolvamos el problema. En vez de usar la energía para mejorar la situación, se utiliza para pelear con las otras personas y desquitarse por habernos herido.

Desafortunadamente, el niño puede sin querer o de manera intencional provocar rápidamente el enojo de sus padres. Porqué? Porque los niños no siempre son atentos o sensibles. Desafían la autoridad, ponen a prueba la paciencia de sus padres y los hacen enfrentar los limites de su conocimiento y sabiduría.

El Sentir y el Actuar Cuando Se Ésta Enojado.

El estar o no enojado depende de muchos factores; no sólo de lo que hizo y dijo el niño, también de su comportamiento en ocasiones pasadas. Nuestra reacción en determinada circunstancia también depende de estos factores así como del lugar donde ocurrir, quien estaba presente y de experiencias pasadas. Por ejemplo, veamos el caso de Andrea, una madre de 28 años de edad que fue a recoger a su niño de la escuela acompañada de su hija de dos años. Después de despedirse de la profesora de su hijo, le dijo a su hija, "Ven Miranda, nos vamos a casa". Miranda no se movió. Un poco irritada Andrea le dijo, "Ahora vamos a regresar a casa" y la tomó de la mano. Retirándose para atrás bruscamente, Miranda dijo en alto, "No mamá!". Andrea inmediatamente le pegó a su hija una bofetada en la cara, la tomó en brazos y le dijo, "Vienes conmigo", mientras que la profesora sorprendida las veía irse.

Andrea estaba muy avergonzada ante la conducta de su hija. ¿Cómo pudo Miranda desafiar su autoridad delante de la profesora? Aunque el comportamiento de Miranda puede haber sido molestoso si hubiese ocurrido en casa, provocó una reacción mucho más fuerte porque fue en público. La verguenza y el enojo de Andrea pasaron a llevar su capacidad de actuar con buen criterio, y en cambio, estalló.

La forma en que

percibimos una determinada situación influye en nuestra forma de responder. Si interpretamos los actos del niño como desafíos hacia nuestra autoridad ya puesta en duda, como en el caso de Andrea , es probable que la reacción sea autoritaria, por ejemplo, un castigo. Esto es lo que ella hizo. En cambio, si entendemos la misma forma de comportamiento como un experimento y una prueba de nuestros límites, podemos establecer límites y entregarle al niño alternativas; por ejemplo; "Quieres caminar a casa o prefieres que te lleve en brazos?"

El estado fisiológico de la persona también influye sobre sus acciones. Tanto la fatiga como el estrés hacen que sea más difícil para el padre controlar su temperamento y detenerse para poder pensar antes de actuar. Como resultado, puede que reaccionemos más rápido y de forma más intensa. Si hemos estado expuestos a situaciones de estrés con otras personas--tal vez la profesora del niño de Andrea, le llamó la atención por la conducta de su hijo--somos más propensos a reaccionar con enojo.

A veces, sólo podemos pensar a un par de alternativas para combatir la mala conducta. Así estamos limitados en cuanto a la forma de reaccionar. Si el padre sólo piensa en castigar al niño por su mal comportamiento, es poco probable que considere otras interpretaciones y soluciones para terminar con el problema. La posibilidad de que el niño tenga hambre o esté molesto; (solución: trate de entender los arrebatos del niño y dele algo de comer o acuéstelo), o que necesite atención positiva; (solución: elogie al niño por su buena conducta y pídale que siga así), no será considerada.

Los Efectos Que Tiene el Enojo en los Niños.

El enojo que hace que el niño se sienta menospreciado ("Eres un estúpido y un idiota. Sal de mis vista. No te puedo ver") siempre es doloroso. Sin embargo, si nosotros los padres nos enojamos ocasionalmente ante la conducta del niño y lo expresamos de forma verbal, (por ejemplo: "No soporto esto: Este lugar es un desorden. Vengo a casa después de trabajar todo el día y siento que tengo que ordenar las cosa de los demás".) el niño aprende que sus padres son humanos capaces de tener sentimiento fuertes. Hablar sobre las causas del enojo con el niño, ayuda a que entienda los sentimientos de sus padres y que también comprenda los suyos.

Sin embargo, el enojo crónico por parte de los padres tiene efectos negativos.

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* Los niños pueden temerle a su propio enojo y al de los demás. Puede que eviten sentir o expresar su enojo, o que traten de evadir estar alrededor de personas que esten enfadadas. El enojo puede ser una señal útil de que algo no anda bien y necesita nuestra atención. Las personas que evitan el enojo pierden esta importante señal. No reconocen que hay un problema, y por lo tanto no pueden resolverlo. Cuando el niño no ha aprendido a usar su enojo en forma constructiva, termina tratando de complacer a todos con tal de evitar la posibilidad de enfadarse y pelear.

*Los niños comienzan a desconectarse y alejarse de sus padres cuando éstos estan enojados. Eventualmente, el niño reaccionará así no sólo cuandos sus padres estan enfadados con él, sino también en otras ocasiones. Así se convertirá en una persona distante e incapaz de tener una relación afectiva de cariño.

*Los niños pueden aprender a tolerar el enojo de sus padres a cambio de poder hacer lo que quieren. Por ejemplo, el padre se enoja con sus hijos porque dejan los juguetes botados en la sala, pero igual los recoge. Los niños aprenden que no es necesario que sean ordenados y que el enojo del padre (sin consecuencias reales) es el precio que tienen que pagar para poder hacer lo que quieran.

*Los niños pueden provocar el enojo de sus padres para llamar su atención. Algunos padres ignoran muchos de los actos positivos de su hijos y reaccionan más cuando los niños se comportan mal. Si no le damos a los niños atención positiva, es probable que busquen atención negativa por medio de la conducta inapropiada. Llevando esto más lejos, los niños puede que disfruten haciendo enojar a sus padres porque sienten que tienen el poder y el control.

Evitando el Enojo Inapropiado.

Cómo podemos controlarnos para no reaccionar con enojo frente a la conducta, a veces provocativa de nuestros hijos?.

Recuerde que a menudo son nuestros pensamientos, inseguridades y problemas los que gatillan nuestra ira, y no sólo la conducta de nuestros hijos.

*Sentirse ineficaz. Todas las personas disfrutan sintiéndose competentes. Pero criar niños es una tarea muy difícil y desafiante. Sentirse incompetente o ineficaz puede provocar el enojo. De esta forma es el niño el que está mal y el padre, el que está bien--así el padre recupera el sentido de eficacia. Seguramente, Andrea se sintió ineficaz al no poder persuadir a que su hija se fuera con ella y por eso se enojó.

*Tomar demasiado responsabilidad. Los padres tienen suficiente que hacer para estar haciéndose cargo de las tareas de sus hijos. Pero a menudo, no saben que hacer para lograr que sus niños cooperen con estas labores. Es más fácil para el padre recoger los juguetes, guardar la ropa o preparar la mesa. Pero cuando lo hace se siente abrumado y se resiente. El resultado? Se enfada con el niño.

*Una imagen insegura de padre. Muchas padres caen en una trampa al ver la conducta de sus niños como un reflejo de su éxito como padres. Cuando los hijos se comportan mal o no son exitosos, la imagen que el padre tiene sobre si mismo se altera. El padre puede pensar: "Si yo fuera realmente un buen padre, mi hijo sería más atento", o "tendría mejores calificaciones en el colegio", o "haría sus deberes", o "no me haría pasar por malos ratos cuando le digo que es tiempo de irnos".

*Tomar las cosas de forma personal. Algunos padres creen que los niños se comportan mal para herirlos. Esto puede ser verdad en algunos casos, pero actuar creyendo solamente esto, agudiza el problema y lo empeora en vez de mejorarlo.

*Sentirse más cómodo con su propia ira, que con el enojo y la infelicidad del niño. Cuando los padres fijan límites severos, los niños reaccionan con rabia y lágrimas. Esto molesta al padre que reacciona enojándose. Por ejemplo, Susan deja otra vez su bicicleta a la entrada del garaje. Papá decide guardarla bajo llave durante una semana. Cuando Susan escucha esto se molesta y le da una rabieta. Si su papá se enfadara ante sus arrebatos y sus gritos, Susan pensaría que él es malo y aprendería muy poco de esta experiencia. Pero si papá mantiene la calma mientras Susan sigue molesta, y después le habla sobre el tema, es muy probable que Susan se de cuenta de su irresponsabilidad y haga la conexión entre sus acciones y las consecuencias de éstas.

* Impedir que alcancemos una meta. A veces los niños hacen que sea difícil para nosotros hacer lo que queremos o lo que necesitamos hacer. La meta puede ser tan simple como relajarse luego de un día de mucho trabajo o el dormir bien. Podemos frustranos, perder la paciencia y enfadarnos. Otras veces, la meta es más compleja, por ejemplo, preparar un informe para el trabajo o estudiar para una examen. La auto-realización del padre puede estar en juego.

Cuando la conducta del niño impide que alcancemos nuestras metas, nos enojamos debido a las preocupaciones y frustraciones que tenemos.

Identificar las fuentes de estrés en nuestras vidas que nos hacen enojar.

Se responsabiliza de demasiadas cosas? Estamos constantemente bajo presión a raíz de los plazos que tenemos que cumplir y el exceso de trabajo? Esta sacando lo mejor de nosotros la ambición–obstaculizando nuestra capacidad para emitir juicios, y haciendo difícil que establezcamos nuestras prioridades? El estrés producto del trabajo nos está abrumando? Es difícil pedirle ayuda a nuestros colegas, esposo/a, o a nuestros niños? De alguna manera, estamos haciendo que la vida sea más complicada de lo que realmente es, martirizándonos (aunque sea poco) y diciendo cosas como: "Sólo yo puedo hacer esto bien", o "Nadie sabe cuanto hago yo", o "Mi familia estaría perdida sin mi". Si es así, estamos exponiendo a nuestros hijos a una ira muy negativa.

Reforzando nuestra hablidad para entender el comportamiento del niño, determinando lo que necesita y abasteciéndolo.

Cómo hace esto el padre? Una forma es elaborando reglas para que el niño sepa a que atenerse y este preparado para lo que va a pasar. Desarrolle rutinas para cuando el niño se levanta, para las horas de comida y cuando se va a dormir. Tómese tiempo para enseñarle al niño sobre la conducta que se espera de él. Explíquele como tiene que actuar cuando van a un restorán o donde tiene que poner los juguetes y sus otras pertenencias. Es difícil para los niños comportarse bien si no están seguro de las reglas.

Hay momentos que necesitamos hablar con el niño sobre una situación particular y ayudarle a solucionar un problema de conducta. Para esto necesitamos hacer buenas preguntas que nos ayuden a entender el pensamiento del niño, y escuchar lo que él tiene que decir–en vez de enseñar, dar conferencias o sugerir cosas. Cuando usted sepa cual es la percepción del niño sobre una situación particular, puede ayudar a que él desarrolle ideas para mejorar la situación. Esto sólo es posible si actuamos cuidadosamente antes que reaccionar con enojo..

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